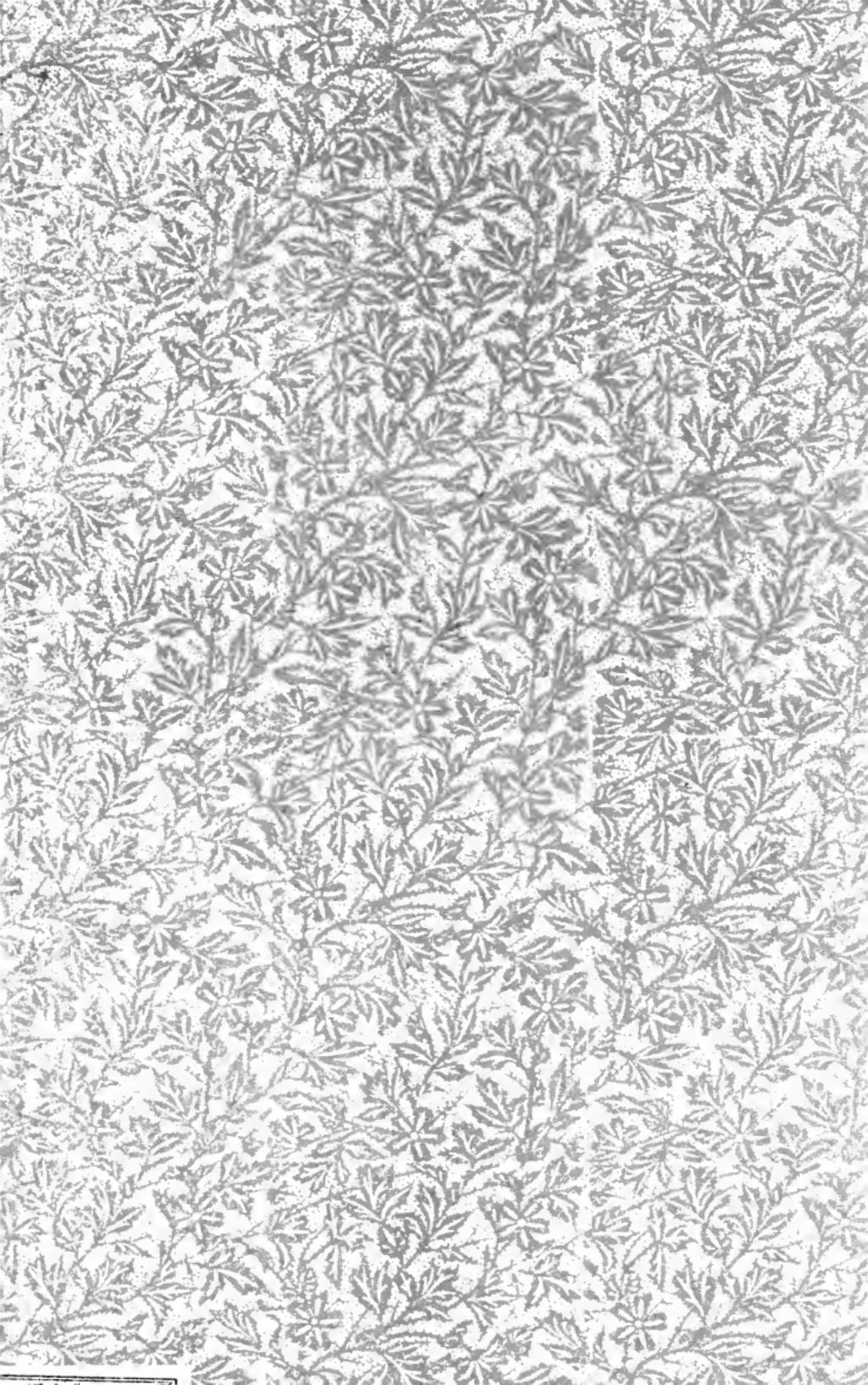


Five Hundred Dollars
and other stories of
New England Life

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(1st ed.)

FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS.



FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS

AND OTHER STORIES

OF

NEW ENGLAND LIFE.

BY C. H. W.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

OF the stories which are collected in this volume, four — “The Village Convict,” “Eli,” “Five Hundred Dollars,” and “The New Minister’s Great Opportunity” — were first published in the “Century Magazine.” “By the Sea” and “Saint Patrick” are now printed for the first time. With reference to the story, “In Madeira Place,” originally published in the “Atlantic Monthly,” it should be said that it was written before the passage of the present federal Civil Service laws, and that in the more important custom-houses the political practices to which it refers have now been in great measure corrected by the new system of examinations. In many branches of the public service, however, both State and National, such abuses remain.





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FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

I.

CAPTAIN PHILO'S sail-loft was a pleasant place to sit in, and it was much frequented. At one end was a wide, sliding door, that opened on the water, and through it you saw the little harbor and the low, glistening sand-bar at its entrance, and whitecaps in the sea beyond, and shining sails. At the other end another wide door led, by a gently descending cleated platform, to the ground.

It was a pleasant place to rest and refresh the mind in, whether you chose to look in or out. You could rock in the hair-cloth chair by the water door, and join in conversation with more active persons mending seines upon the wharf; or you could dangle your heels from the work-bench, and listen to stories and

debates inside, and look on Captain Philo sewing upon a mainsail.

It was a summer afternoon: warm under the silver poplars, hot in the store, and hotter in the open street; but in the sail-loft it was cool.

“More than once,” Captain Bennett was remarking from the rocking-chair, while his prunella shoes went up and down,—“more than once I’ve wished that I could freight this loft to Calcutta on speculation, and let it out, so much a head, for so long a time, to set in and cool off.”

“How about them porous water-jars they hev there?” asked Uncle Silas, who had never sailed beyond Cape Pogue; “how do they work?”

“Well,” said the captain, “they’re so-so. But you set up this loft, both doors slid open, air drawing through and all, right on Calcutta main street, or what they call the Maiden’s Esplanade, and fit it up with settees like a conference-meeting, and advertise, and you could let out chances to set for twenty cents an hour.”

“You’d hev to hev a man to take tickets, to the door,” said Uncle Silas, who had been looking for an easy job for forty years.

"That's Si all over," said Captain Bennett, with a wink; "that berth would be just his size."

"Well," said Uncle Silas, faintly smiling, "'t is no use rubbin' the fur the wrong way; stroke the world from head to tail is my rule."

"Speaking of folks being easy," said Captain Bennett, "it seems there's quite a little story about David Prince's voyage on the 'Viola.'"

"I thought he went off whaling rather in a hurry," said Captain Philo, "and if it had been 'most anybody else, I should have thought there was something up."

"It seems," said Captain Bennett, "it was like this: You know, Delia was n't much over ten years old when her mother died, along a piece after her father, and she come to live with us. And you know how she was almost like one of the family. Well, about eight years ago, when she'd got to be towards nineteen, it was then that David first set out to shine up to her; and when he begun to come home from singing-school with her that winter, and got to coming to the house quite often the

next spring along, I begun to feel a little shaky. Finally, one Sunday afternoon I was sitting out on the porch and she was singing hymns inside,—you know she was always singing,—and I called to her to quit and come out, and sit down alongside of me, and says I,—

“‘Delia, it can’t be you’re thinking of taking up with David Prince?’

“‘Well, she flared a little, but finally says she:

“‘Why should n’t I, or anybody that has the chance, take David Prince?’

“‘Well,’ says I, ‘I don’t think you need to ask why; I should say that a smart girl would n’t want more than to travel once along the Lower Road and see those two run-down houses,—one deserted, and the other, handy by, about as bad,—and the barn across the road, that was raised and boarded in over forty years ago, and never shingled, and stood so till it’s all rotted and sunk in.’

“‘What’s that got to do with David?’ says she.

“‘It’s got this to do with David,’ says I, ‘that his father and his Uncle Ezekiel and their father before ‘em — good, kindly men — all

seemed to settle, settle, somehow; and it was all to-morrow, and to-morrow, with 'em; ' and then I told Delia how they sold off their wood and then their land, piecemeal, all but the spot where the old buildings stand,— and that 's worth nothing.

“ ‘ And that 's the way,’ says I, ‘ it 'll be with David when he gets over being a boy and settles down; it 's in the blood; and I don 't want to see you, Delia, keel-hauled there — ’ ”

“ Like David's mother,— Prudence Frost, that was,” said Uncle Silas; “ originally she was a good, smart girl, and full of jingle; but finally she give up and come to it,— lef' sweepin'-day out o' the almanic, washed dishes in cold water, and made up beds at bedtime; and when she ironed a shirt, jes 's like 's not she 'd iron a hoss-fly right into the bosom.”

“ And lived a dog 's life generally,” said Captain Bennett. “ So I laid the whole thing out to Delia, the best way I knew how.

“ ‘ Well,’ says she, ‘ I know you mean my good, Captain Bennett,— but I shall take my chances.’ And so she did. Well — ”

“ Speakin' o' the barn,” said Uncle Silas, “ do

you remember that high shay that David's father hed? I was up to the Widow Pope's vendue the day he bid it off. He managed to spunk up so fur's to hitch the shaffs under his team and fetch the ve-hicle home, and then he hed n't no place to put it up out o' the weather,— and so he druv it along under that big Bald'n apple-tree that used to stand by the pantry window, on the north side o' the house, and left it there, with the shaffs clawin' down in the ground. Then the talk was, he was goin' to build him a sort of a little tabernacle for it before winter set in; and he hed down a load of lumber from Uncle Joe's mill and hed it dumped down alongside o' the shay. But the shay was n't never once hitched up, nor the tabernacle built; and the timber and the shay jes' set there, side by side, seein' who'd speak first, for twenty year, to my cer-ting knowledge; and you go by there when it was blowin' fresh, and the old curtings would be flappin' in and out, black and white, till finally the whole arrangement sunk out o' sight. I guess there's more or less wrack there now, 'f you sh'd go poke in the grass."

“ It was thirty-one year ago, come October, that he bought the shay,” said Captain Philo ; “ it was the fall I was cast away on the Tombstones, and lost every dollar I had. I remember it because the old man came down to the house of his own accord, when I got home, and let me have two hundred dollars. He’d just been selling the West New Field ; and when he’d sold land and had money on hand, it was anybody’s that wanted it. But what was it about David’s going off so sudden on the ‘ Viola ’? ”

“ Oh, yes, I forgot my errand,” said Captain Bennett ; “ and now I’ve got adrift in my story, and I shall have to take an observation ; let’s see, where was I? ”

“ Delia allowed she’d take her chances,” said Uncle Silas.

“ Oh, yes,” said Captain Bennett. “ Well, you know how it was when they got married : David fixed the old house up a little, and mother put in some furniture and things for her, and all went on first-rate awhile ; and then you know how David begun to settle, settle, just the old way ; could n’t seem to keep up to the wind ;

appeared to carry a lee hel-m, somehow; and Delia begun to take in work and go out to work, and quit singing. She never said a word, even to my wife; but I could see 't it cut her a good deal — ”

“ But all this time,” said Uncle Silas, “ she 's kep' up smart, — allers hed a high crower's-feather 'n her bunnet, and kep' her little boys a-lookin' like nine-shillin' dolls.”

“ I should n't have ever called David lazy,” said Captain Philo. “ He could n't seem to make up his mind what to do next, that 's all; but get him going — you remember how he worked at Jason's fire; and I know of my own knowledge he was in the surf for sixteen hours, when that Norwegian bark was on the Bar.”

“ I think there 's some folks,” said Uncle Silas, “ that their mind works all the time — runs a day gang and runs a night gang. You know how a hard sum 'll shake itself out in your head overnight; and I think it 's the most natural thing that a man with a A No. 1 active mind always should feel sort of tired and not know what ails him. George, won't you jes'

git up and hand me that pipe — you ain't doin' nothin'."

"However it was," said Captain Bennett, "Delia saw that he was drifting to leeward, and she was worried. Well, you know when the reformation set in, that winter, and run crowded houses,—one night in the West Church and the next in the other. One night David surprised his wife by going; and he set in a back seat, and come away and said nothing; and the same the next night; and the same for seven or eight nights right along. Finally, one night, they had a pretty searching sermon,—'*Choose ye this day*,' et cetera,—and I suppose the Deacon, here, was rather expecting David to rise for prayers; but, instead of that, as soon as Amen was said, he gets right up, and off he goes, and leaves Delia there, without saying a word to her or to anybody, and goes right up to Captain Westcott's house and agrees to ship. And glad enough Captain W. was to have him, and next day off he went. Now here he is, gone two years and over, and comes home night before last; his lay 'll figure out five hundred dollars; and the biggest thing is"—here the

Captain brought down his heavy hand, for emphasis, on Uncle Silas's knee — “that Delia 's kept herself and the children, and never drawn one cent against the voyage; so they 've got the whole clear, and they 've been up this morning early and traded for the Callender place, and they 're going to move in to-morrow. And I guess he means business now.”

“But they don't git paid off till Monday,” said Uncle Silas. “They 're all goin' up to town to be paid off then.”

“Well, he moves in to-morrow, anyway,” said Captain Bennett. “Monday night, I believe, he 's going to pay down what he has, and take a deed, and give a mortgage back for the balance.”

But Uncle Silas gravely shook his head.

“I can't indorse this runnin' in haste,” he said. “I never, in all my experience, knew a man before to buy real estate without sort of goin' up street and talkin' it over, and comparin' notes 'round generally. Now, we could have given him points down here about the Callender place.”

“Oh, he 's made a good trade there,” said Captain Bennett.

"That all may be," said Uncle Silas, "but it's the principle, not the five cents, I'm lookin' at. I should have hed more faith in his holdin' out if he hed n't jumped quite so quick. 'Slow bind, fast find,' I say."

Captain Bennett rose, and drew on a grass-cloth coat that showed his suspenders through.

"I must be on my winding way," he said. "But did you hear how close he came to never coming back? No? Well, it was like this: It was blowing a gale, and considerable sea on, one night when they were rounding Cape Horn on the home voyage, and she was pitching pretty bad, and David was out on the jib-boom taking in jib, and somehow she pitched with a jerk, so he lost his hold and went off, and, as he fell in the dark, naturally he struck out both hands, blind, like this; and he just happened to catch, by sheer accident, a gasket that was hanging from the jib-boom, and so he saved himself by a hair's breadth. And when he came up they thought it was his ghost."

"Well, I always make it a point to look on the bright side, without exception," said Uncle Silas; "nevertheless, I prophesy it won't be two

years before he 'll have the place all eat up, and sold out under the mortgage. This jumpin' so quick,—looks as if he was sca't to trust himself for a day."

"Well, we shall see," said Captain Bennett; "time will tell."

There are many little farms along the New England sea-board, which the currents of life, diverted from ancient channels, have left one side, pleasant and homelike often, but of small money value. The Callender place was such a farm.

It lay a mile from the village, in a hamlet of half-a-dozen dwellings. There was a substantial house, with four large rooms below, besides an L kitchen, and above, two sunny chambers, each with a dormer and a gable window. From the front fence projected, for a hitching-post, a Minerva, carved from wood,—a figure-head washed up years before from the wreck of a brig with the bodies of the crew.

The house was on a little elevation, and looked across the road, near which it stood, and over a sloping field or two, to sea. From the windows

you could count the sail in the North Channel, and look down the coast and follow with the eye the long, low curving line of shore until at Indian Point it vanished; or look up shore ten miles to where the coast-line ended in a bold, wooded headland, which seemed, by a perpetual mirage, to bear foliage so lofty as to show daylight through beneath the branches. At night you could see the flash of the revolving light on Windmill Rock, and the constant rays from the lightship on the Rips. So that by day or night you could never be lonesome, unless, perhaps, on some thick night, when you could see no light, and could only hear a grating knell from the bell-buoy, and could seem to see, through the white darkness, the waters washing over its swaying barrel.

There was a good-sized boarded barn, well shingled on the roof, with hay-mows, and with room for two or three cows and a horse and a wagon, and with wide doors "fore and aft," as the neighbors put it; through its big front door you could look out to sea. Then there were twenty acres of land, including a wood-lot which could be thinned out every year to give one all

his fire-wood, and what was cut would hardly be missed.

Such was the place which, on the death of the Widow Callender, had been offered for sale for eight hundred dollars. For months it had stood empty, stormed by all the sea-winds, lit up by the sun, when at last an unexpected buyer had turned up in David Prince.

It was a happy Sunday that he passed with his little family at the new home. They went all over the house again and again, and looked from every window, and planned where flower-frames should be put, to take the sun. Then, going out of doors, they inspected the revolving clothes-dryer, which David, with a seaman's instinct, had already rigged with four little sloops to sail about on the ends of the projecting arms, on Mondays, tacking after shirts and stockings. Then they went to the barn, and David showed how he was going to cover the sides with spruce shingles, so that he could have a warm place to work in in the winter. Then they went over the fields, and planned a garden for the next spring; and then they went down to the shore, and,

where a little arm of the sea made in, David showed where he would haul up his dory, and would keep his boat, when he could afford to get one together: in the mean time he was going to fish on shares with Jacob Foster, who lived a few rods up the road. Then they all strolled back to the house, and dined on shore-birds shot on Saturday afternoon, and new potatoes and turnips which Jacob Foster had brought in.

After dinner, they all sat at the front windows, in the room which they were pleased to call the parlor, David holding on his knees the two oldest boys, delighted with the recovery of such a Sindbad of a father, while the third, still a little shy of him, stood by his mother. David told of the voyage, repeating, by request, full half-a-dozen times, the story of the night when he was snapped off the end of the jib-boom; to do which he had to set the boys down and stand, to make the swift, sudden clutch, with his eyes shut, at the towing rope; at which the boys screamed on every repetition.

After supper, David and his wife, leaving the children with orders to go to bed at the first flash from the Windmill, went to church.

They took the same back seat which they had the night that David shipped. There was much the same scene before them. There was bald-headed Deacon Luce, in his usual Damocles' seat exactly beneath the dangling chandelier, which children watched in morbid hope of a horror; there was the president of the Dorcas Society, a gray-haired woman who had navigated home a full-rigged ship from the Gold Coast; there were grave-faced men who, among them, could have charted half the globe. In the pulpit was the same old-fashioned, bookish man, who, having led his college class, had passed his life in this unknown parish, lost in delight, in his study, in the great Athenian's handling of the presumptuous Glaucon, or simply unfolding parables in his pulpit.

That former night came vividly back to Delia Prince. Through the opening hymn, in which she did not join; through the story of the feast in Simon's house, she was thinking of the time when David told her he had shipped, and she had made up her mind to save a home.

But in the second hymn she joined; and in her joy she forgot herself and sang, — as she had

been used to sing when she was the leader of all the singing. In a moment they all knew that she was there.

“ Thus far the Lord hath led me on;
Thus far His power prolongs my days;
And every evening shall make known
Some fresh memorial of His grace.”

II.

“ M. ISAACS” was over the door; Mr. Isaacs was within. Without, three golden balls were hanging, like apples of the Hesperides; within was an array of goods which the three balls had brought in.

Mr. Isaacs was walking to and fro behind the counter, and briskly rubbing his hands.

“ My good wife Sarah,” he said, with a strong Semitic accent, “ those sudden, raw east winds ! I am so frozen as if I was enjoying myself upon the skating-rink,— and here it is the summer. Where is that long spring overcoat that German man hypotecated with us last evening ? Between the saddle and the gold-lace uniform, you say ? ”

And taking it down, by means of a long,

hooked pole, he put it on. It covered his ears and swept the ground: "It make me look like Aaron in those pictures," he said.

It would have been a grasping disposition that could not be suited with something from out Mr. Isaacs's stock. It would have been hard to name a faculty of the human soul or a member of the human body to which it could not lend aid and comfort. One musically inclined could draw the wailing bow or sway the accordion; pucker at the pensive flute, or beat the martial, soul-arousing drum. One stripped, as it were, on his way to Jericho, could slink in here and select for himself a fig-leaf from a whole Eden of cut-away coats and wide-checkered trousers, all fitting "to surprise yourself," and could be quite sure of finding a pair of boots, of whatever size was needed, of the very finest custom hand work,—a misfit, made for a gentleman in New York. A devout man, according to his leanings, could pray from the prayer-book of an impoverished Episcopalian, or sing from the hymn-book of an insolvent Baptist.

"So help me gracious!" Mr. Isaacs used to say, raising his shoulders and opening wide his

palms ; " when you find a man so ungrateful that he cannot be fitted out with somethings from my stock, I really suppose you could not fit that man out in Paradise."

Mr. Isaacs was looking nervous. But it was not by the images which his ordinary stock in trade would naturally cause to arise that he was disturbed,— images though they were of folly, improvidence, and distress. There was indeed hardly an article in the shop, except the new plated jewelry in the window, that was not suggestive of misery or of sin. But in Mr. Isaacs's well-poised mind no morbid fancies arose. " Those hard winters makes me cheerful," he was wont to say in the fall; " they makes the business lifely."

Still, Mr. Isaacs was a little troubled this afternoon, and, singularly enough, about a most happy purchase that he had just made, at ninety per cent below value. There the articles lay upon the counter,— a silk hat, a long surtout, a gold-headed cane and a pair of large rubbers; a young man's Derby hat and overcoat and rattan cane, and a pair of arctics; a lady's bonnet and dolman and arctics; a young girl's hat

with a soft bird's-breast, and her seal-skin sack and arctics; besides four small boys' hats and coats and arctics. It seemed as if some modern Elijah, a family man, expectant of translation, had made with thrifty forethought an "arrangement" that Mr. Isaacs's shop should be the point of departure, and flying off in joyous haste, with wife and children, had left the general raiment on the counter. You would naturally have looked for a sky-lit hole in the ceiling.

"So help me gracious!" said Mr. Isaacs, turning the articles over; "I suppose there's some policemen just so wicked and soospicious to say I must know those garments are stolen — scooped off some hat-tree, the last winter, at one grab."

"Why do you enter dose on de book togedder?" said Mrs. Isaacs. "If you put dose separate on de book, how de policeman know dey came in togedder?"

"That is a great danger, Sarah. That's just the way they fix our good friend Greenbaum. When they caught the thief, and he tell them where he sell some things, and Greenbaum had put down those earrings and those brace-

lets and that Balmoral skirt for three different times, they say he must know those things was stolen,—if not, why did he put those things down different from each other?

“But so help me gracious!” he added, presently, “I have not the least soospicions, like the babes unborn, those goods are stolen. The man that brought them in was very frank, and very much of a gentleman; and he lay his hand upon his bosom-pin, and swear he sell those things because he has no more use for them,—his family all sick of tyvoid fever, and cannot live the week out. But I suppose there’s some policemen just so soospicious to say I must know those things are stolen.”

“And so cruel soospicions,” said Mrs. Isaacs, — “and your heart so pure and white like your shirt-bosom.” She meant his ideal shirt-bosom.

“Just like those evil-minded policemen,” he said. “You remember how they lock up our old friend Abrahamson? So help me gracious! sent that good old man to prison, just because he buy two gold watches and two pairs of gold spectacles and an ivory-handled knife and two empty pocket-books and

two silk umbrellas and a seal ring and two bunches of keys and two black wigs from a red-headed laboring man; they say he must know that two old gentlemen were robbed of that personal property."

But here his attention was diverted by the sight of two men, seamen to appearance, who were looking into the show-window.

"I like so much," he said, "to see the public enjoying themselves in my window; it give them so happy pleasure to see those lovely things; and often they comes in and buy somethings. This young man," he added, after a pause, "seem to admire those broad neck-wear; he look at both those two,—the Four-in-hand and the Frolic."

"I think he look most at de Frolic," said Mrs. Isaacs; "I think he would come in if you go outside and take him by de arm like a true frient, and bring him in. My broder Moses walk outside de whole day long, and take each man when he go by and talk to him like his own broder, wid tears in his eyes, and make dem come in and buy somedings."

But Mr. Isaacs only wrapped the long coat

more closely about his linen garments, and watched the younger man as he turned his eyes away from the Four-in-hand and the Frolic and bent them on the trays in which were glittering tiers of rings and pins, and rows of watches labelled "Warrented genuine, \$14;" "Dirt-cheap, \$8.75;" "Doct's Watch, Puls-counting, \$19.50."

"He look like he had some money," said Mrs. Isaacs. "Perhaps he would come in and buy a watch if you go out and pull him in. How can he buy someding through de glass? My broder Moses say, 'So many folks is bashful.'"

But at last the men, after talking awhile, apparently of the goods in the window, came in.

"What's the price of some of those ear-rings in the window?" said the younger. "Let's see what you've got for a couple of dollars or so."

"So help me gracious!" said Mr. Isaacs, as he took from the show-window three or four cards of plated ear-rings. "I knew you would come in to buy somethings. When I saw you look in — the very first moment—I say to my wife,

‘There is a good young man that will give a present to some lovely young lady.’ Yes, sir, the very words I said to Sarah.”

“What’s the price of this pair? I have n’t got any girl to treat, but I’ve just got paid off for a whaling voyage, and my lay figured up a twenty-dollar bill above what I expected, and I don’t care if I do lay out a couple of dollars on my wife besides what I’ve brought home for her.”

“Well, sir,” said Mr. Isaacs, “the good wife is the very best jewelry. Those are two dollars. But only study this pair. Hold those up to the light and take a bird’s-eye view through those lovely stones, so round and large like green peas. Now look. So! Now let your friend look!”

“I’m no judge,” said the other man, “I know what pleases me — that’s all. But them would make a great display, David, would n’t they?”

“You’re right, sir,” said Mr. Isaacs. “‘Display’ is the very word. My wife wear just the twins of this pair to the congregation, every week.”

Mrs. Isaacs raised her eyebrows: she wore nothing but diamonds.

"What's the price of these green ones?" asked David.

Mr. Isaacs shrugged his shoulders.

"I suppose those are the finest articles of the kind in the whole creation," he said. "We can let you have those to-day," and he lowered his voice to a whisper, and put his hand up beside his mouth, "to close out stock—for six dollars. They cost us only last week eight-fifty, but we are obliged to reduce stock prior to removal. The building is to be taken down."

"I would like those tip-top; but I don't know—it's a good deal of money for gewgaws; my wife would take me to do for it; I guess I must keep to the two-dollar ones. I come pretty hard by my dollars, and a dollar means a good deal to me just now."

"But just once look again," said Mr. Isaacs, and he stepped briskly behind his wife and held up an ear-ring to each of her ears. "See them on a chaste and lovely form. With these your wife will be still more lovely. All those other men will say, 'Where did that graceful lady

find so rich ear-rings?' You will see they are a great success: her most bosom friends will hate her; they will turn so green like the grass on the ground with envy. It is a great pleasure when my wife wears those kind: her very sisters cannot speak for anger, and her own mother looks so rigid like the Cardiff Giant."

"Well, I guess I shall have to take them," said David, "and you'll have to wrap them right up: we have n't got more than about time to get the train, have we, Calvin?"

"So help me gracious!" said Mr. Isaacs, "is there no time to sell our friend Calvin a pair? He will repent not to secure those other pair, until his dying day; so sorry like he lose his ship some day upon those rocks. I suppose there is no others like those in the whole creation."

But he wrapped the purchase up in a bit of white paper and gave David Prince four trade dollars in change for a ten-dollar bill, and the two men went out, leaving Mr. Isaacs free to attend to a timid woman in black who had just come in to raise fifty cents upon a ring, while Mrs. Isaacs looked after a car-

penter who proposed to pawn his edge-tools for rent-money.

Mr. Isaacs waved his hand and smiled as the men went out of the door. "You will find they are a success, to surprise yourself," he called out: "her most bosom friends will writhe and scream with envy."

The winding line of the long New England coast faces the sea, in its sweeping curves, in every direction. From the Callender place, the ocean lay to the south. Though elsewhere east winds might be blowing harsh upon the coast, here, almost every day, and all day long, in summer, the southwest wind came pouring in from the expanse of waters, fresh and cool, boisterous often, but never chill; and even winds from the east lost edge in crossing miles of pitch-pine woods, of planted fields, of sandy ponds, of pastures, and came in softened down and friendly.

A gentle breeze was drifting in from sea. All day long it had been blowing, salt and strong and riotous, tossing the pine-tops, bending the corn, swaying the trees in the orchards,

but now it was preparing to die away, as was its wont, at sundown, to give to the woods, the cornfields and the orchards a little space of rest and peace before it should rise again in the early evening to toss them all night long. The blue of the sky was blue in the water. Every object stood out sharp and clear. Down the low, curving shore-line, curls of smoke rose from distant roofs, and on the headland, up the coast, the fairy forest in the air was outlined with precision. Distant ships were moving, like still pictures, on the horizon, as if that spell were laid on them which hushed the enchanted palace. There was just sea enough to roll the bell-buoy gently, and now and then was rung an idle note of warning. Three fishing-boats lay anchored off the Spindle, rising and falling, and every now and then a sea broke on the rock. On the white sand beach, waves were rolling in, dying softly away along the shore, or heavily breaking, with a long, flying line of foam.

The sun was fast descending. Delia Prince went out to the corner of the house and shaded her eyes to look at the sunset. The white

clouds turned to a flaming red, and the reflection dyed to crimson the surface of the creeks; the sun descended toward the wooded bluff that flanked the bay, sent a thousand shattered, dazzling rays through the trees, and disappeared.

The red of the clouds and the red of the water gave place to gray. The wind died down. The silence was intense,—all the more marked because of the few sharp sounds that broke it now and then. Across the bay, near shore, a man was raking oysters; he stood in the stern of his skiff, and the bow was up in the air. Near by a girl was driving sluggish cows along the beach, and her shrill cries came over the water; by a cottage on the bank a boy was chopping brush upon a block, and Delia watched the silent blows, and heard the sound come after. He smiled as she looked; for every night she saw the boy's mother stand at the door to call him, and saw him come reluctant to his task.

There was a sense of friendly companionship in all these homely sights and sounds. It was different from the old house, shut in close by a second growth of birch and oak.

The table was standing ready for a late supper. The children had gone for berries to the Island, and they would soon come home, and David was due, too, with his money.

She smiled as he appeared. The ascent to the brow of the hill was so sharp that first you saw a hat in movement, then a head, then shoulders, body, legs, and feet. She ran quickly down the road to meet him, and took his arm.

"You could n't catch the noon train?" she said. "Captain Wells stopped at the door a little while ago to see what time we should be down to get the deed, and luckily I told him that we might not be down until into the evening. He said he'd stay at home and wait till we came."

"Delia," said David, when he had seated himself in the house, "I've got bad news to tell you, and I may as well out with it first as last."

"You have n't shipped for another whaling voyage?"

"No; that would be nothing," he said.

Delia stood and looked at him.

"Well," she said, "did n't you get as much as you counted on?"

"Yes, — twenty more."

"It is n't anything about the children? I expect them home every minute."

"No."

"Delia," he said, "you was a great fool ever to have me. You ought to have taken advice."

"What is the matter?" she said. "Why don't you tell me?"

"I've lost the money," he said. "The Captain warned me how apt a seafaring man is to lose money; but I did n't take any heed, and I went off with Calvin Green —"

"With Calvin Green! What did I tell you!" she said.

"Wait a minute — and I stopped into a jewelry store and bought you a pair of ear-rings, and I came off and left my wallet on the counter, the way that fool Joe Bassett did, to Gloucester. When I went back, the rascal claimed he never saw me before — said he did n't know me from the Prophet Samuel, as if I was born that minute. And now they 'll all say — and it's true — that I 'm a chip of

the old block, and that I 'm bound to come out at the little end. There!" he said, as he opened a little parcel and took out the earrings. "There's what's left of five hundred and twenty dollars, and you must make the most of 'em. Hold 'em up to the light and see how handsome they are. I don't know, after all, but they are worth while for a man to pitch overboard off Cape Horn and harpoon whales two years for. All is, just tell folks they cost five hundred dollars, and they 'll be just as good as hen's-egg diamonds.

"In fact, I don't know but I sort o' like the situation," he went on, in a moment. "It seems sort of natural and home-like. I should have felt homesick if I 'd really succeeded in getting this place paid for. 'T would have seemed like getting proud, and going back on my own relations. And then it 'll please everybody to say, 'I told you so.' There 'll be high sport round town, when it gets out, and we back water down to the old place.

"Come, say something, Delia!" he said, in a moment. "Why don't you say something about it? Don't you care that the money's

lost, that you stand there and don't say a word, and look at nothing?"

"I don't want to say anything now," she said, "I want to think."

"Well!" said Captain Bennett, the next day, to his wife, "Delia's got more spunk! I should have felt like laying right down in the shafts, in her place; but instead of that, to actually go and talk them into letting her keep the Callender place and pay for it so much a month! And David's signed a paper to do it."

"I guess if the truth was known," said Mrs. Bennett, knitting on, "that, come to think it over, she was more scared of David's settling back than she was for losing the money."

"She's got a pull on him now," said the Captain, "anyway, for if he once agrees to a thing he always does it."

III.

No one fully knows the New England autumn who has not seen its colors on the extreme Old Colony sea-board. There are no

mountain ranges, opening out far reaches of burning maples; but there are miles of salt-marsh, spreading as far as the eye can reach, cut by countless creeks, displaying a vast expanse of soft, rich shades of brown; there are cranberry-meadows of twenty, thirty, or fifty level acres, covered with matted vines and crimson with berries; there are deserted pastures, bright with golden-rod and asters. And everywhere along the shores, against the dark pine woods, are the varied reds of oaks, of blackberry vines, of woodbine, and of sumach.

It was a bright fall afternoon; most of the boats were in, and lay near shore before the sail-loft door; the sails were up to dry,—for it had been wet outside,—looking doubly white against the colors of the shore.

In the sail-loft they were telling stories.

“No, I don’t think myself,” said Deacon Luce, from the rocking-chair, “that ministers always show what we call horse sense. They used to tell a story of Parson Allen, that preached in the Old Town, in my father’s time, that pleased me. One spring the parson took a notion to raise a pig. So he went down to Jim Barrows,

that lived there handy by, and says he, 'Mr. Barrows, I hear you have a litter of young pigs, and I should like to have one to raise.' So Jim he got his stilyards and weighed him out one, and the minister paid him, and Jim he sent it up. Well, the minister kep' it some three months, and he used to go out every day and put on his spectacles and take his scythe down from the apple-tree and mow pig-weed for him, and he bought corn-meal to feed him up with, and one way and another he laid out a good deal on him. The pig fattened well, but the whole incessant time he was either rooting out and gitting into the garden, or he'd ketch his foot in behind the trough and squeal like mad, or something else, so that the minister had to keep leaving his sermon-writing to straighten him out, and the minister's wife complained of the squealing when she had company. And so the parson decided to heave the enterprise up, and Jim sent up and took the pig back. Come to settle, 'How do we stand?' says the minister. 'Oh, just as you say,' says Jim, 'I'll leave it to you.' 'Well,' says the minister, 'on the one hand you've got back

a pig that you've been paid for; but, on the other hand, I've had the use of him for some three months,— and so I guess we're square.' "

"Talking of preachers," said Caleb Parker, "reminds me of a story they tell of Uncle Cephas Bascom, of Northhaven. Uncle Cephas was a shoemaker, and he never went to sea much, only to anchor his skift in the Narrows abreast of his house, and catch a mess of scup, or to pole a load of salt-hay from Sanquitt Island. But he used to visit his married daughter, in Vermont, and up there they knew he come from the sea-board, and they used to call him 'Captain Bascom.' So, one time when he was there, they had a Sabbath-school concert, and nothing would do but 'Captain Bascom' must talk to the boys, and tell a sea-yarn, and draw a moral, the way the Deacon, here, does." The Deacon gravely smiled, and stroked his beard. "Well, Uncle Cephas was ruther pleased with his name of 'Captain Bascom,' and he did n't like to go back on it, and so he flaxed round to git up something. It seems he had heard a summer boarder talk in Sabbath-school, at Northhaven; he told how a poor

boy minded his mother, and then got to tend store, and then kep' store himself, and then he jumped it on them. 'That poor boy,' says he, 'now stands before you.' So Uncle Cephas thought him up a similar yarn. Well, he had never spoke in meeting before, and he hemmed and hawed some, but he got on quite well while he was telling about a certain poor boy, and all that, and how the boy when he grew up was out at sea, in an open boat, and saw a great sword-fish making for the boat *Hail Columbia*, and bound to stave right through her and sink her, — and how this man he took an oar, and give it a swing, and broke the critter's sword square off; and then Uncle Cephas — he'd begun to git a little flustered — he stops short, and waves his arms, and says he, 'Boys, what do you think! That sword-fish now stands before you!'

"I cal'late that brought the house down."

Captain Philo, who had laid down his three-cornered sail-needle, to listen to this exciting story, readjusted the leather thimble that covered his palm, and began to sew again. Uncle Silas, sitting near the water door, in his brown overalls made with a breast-apron and suspender-

straps, looked out at the boats. A silence fell on the company.

It was broken by Calvin Green.

"A man was telling me rather a curious story, the other night," he said. "I was just explaining to him exactly how 't was that David Prince lost his money, and so he told this: —

"There was a boy that was clerk in a store, and one day they sent him over to the bank to git some money. It was before the war, and the bank gave him twenty ten-dollar gold pieces. But when he got back to the store there was one short. The boy had n't nothin' to say. He admitted he had n't dropped none, because he'd put 'em in a leather bag where he could n't lose one without he lost all, and the cashier knew *he* had n't made any mistake. The store-keeper he heard the story, and then he put his hand on the boy's shoulder, and says he, 'I don't know what to make o' this; but I believe this boy,' says he, 'and we 'll just drop it, and say no more about it.' So it run along, and the next day that it rained, one of the clerks in the store took down an old umberella, and, come to unfurl it, out falls a ten-dollar gold piece.

Seems that the boy had that umberella that day, and hooked it on to the counter in the bank, by the handle, and one of the coins must have slid off into it when he was countin' 'em, and then he probably did n't spread the umberella coming back. And, as this man said that was telling me, it don't do to bet too much on suspicion. Now, only for that Jew's being such a hard character, according to the newspapers, I should be loath to charge him with taking David's money; I should say David might have lost it somewhere else."

Nobody spoke. Captain Bennett whistled softly.

"I never felt so bad in my life," continued Green, "as I did when he missed his money. When we come up into the depot he was telling me a kind of a comical story about old Jim Torrey, how he wanted to find out if all his hens was laying, or if any of 'em was disposed to shirk, and he got him a pass-book ruled in columns, and opened a ledger account with every hen, by a name he give her; and we got up to the ticket-window, and he put his hand into his breast-pocket for his wallet— by George !

I 've seen him chaff and joke, sort of quiet, when we was going to ride under every minute ; but he turned as white then as that new mainsail, and off he went, like a shot. But 't was no use. Of course, the jewelry feller would n't disgorge on David's say-so, without no proof.

" It was like this," he went on ; " the counter was here, — and David stood here, — and I was here, — and we both come off together. But I tell you, — the way David looked when he put in his hand for his wallet ! He stopped laughing, as if he see a ghost ; I can't get it out of my head. And how the man that stole the money can stand it I can't figure out."

" Perhaps he 's calloused," said the Deacon, " by what the paper said the other night about his buying a parcel of clothes hooked out of some man's entry. We concluded 't was the same man — by the name."

" Can't believe all that 's in the paper," said Perez Todd ; " you know the paper had me to be married, once ; the boys put it in for fun ; they made up the name for the female, I guess, for I 've been kind of shyin' round for her this ten year, and have n't seen no such woman."

"Yes, sir, he's a hard ticket," said Green; "that's so, every time. Well, I must be going; I agreed to go and help Elbridge over at half flood."

"Half flood about five," said Captain Bennett; "you have n't any great time to spare."

Green went to the shore, rattled a skiff down over the beach to the water, and pulled away, with quick, short strokes. First the skiff was cut off from sight by the marsh-bank; then the rower's head alone was seen above the tall brown grasses; and then he pulled around the bend and was lost to view behind a mass of flaming woodbine; and still, in the distance, could be heard across the water the rattle of his oars in the thole-pins.

"Well, Silas?" said Captain Bennett.

"Well?" said Uncle Silas.

"Oh! I've nothing to say," said Captain Bennett.

"Nor I," said Uncle Silas.

"Calvin's always seemed to be a good-hearted fellow," said Captain Philo, "since he's lived here."

"Oh, yes," said Captain Bennett; "seems to

feel for David surprisingly. Told me all about the losing of the money, told my wife, told my boy, told Uncle Joe, told our minister, told the Doctor, told Zimri Cobb, told Cyrus Bass, told Captain John Wells, told Patrick Coan; and proves it out to 'em all that 't was the Jew that did it."

"Kind of zealous, like the Apostle Paul supplying the pulpit to the Gentiles," said the Deacon; "won't let alone of a man, till he gives in 't the Hebrew's in the wrong."

"But *I*'ve nothing to say," said Captain Bennett.

"Oh, no, nor *I*," said Uncle Silas.

From the distance, borne on the gentle breeze, a click as even as a pulse-beat came faintly over the water.

"He may be a good-hearted fellow," said the Deacon, "but I don't know as I hanker to be the man that's pulling that skiff. But then,—that may be simply and solely because I prefer a hair-cloth rocker to a skiff."

"Delia," said David Prince to his wife, one afternoon, "Calvin Green has bought four

tickets to that stereopticon show that's going to be in the West Church to-night, and he gave me two, for you and me."

"I don't want his tickets," she replied, ironing away at the sunny window.

"Now, what's the use of talking that way?" said her husband, "as much as to say —"

"I have my opinion," she said.

"Well," said her husband, "I think it's a hard way to use a man, just because he happened to be by when I lost my money."

"I'll tell you," said Delia, stopping her work; "we will go, and all I'll say is this — you see if after the lecture's over he does n't find a text in it to talk about our money. Now, you just wait and see — that's all."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the lecturer, standing by a great circle of light thrown on the wall, behind the pulpit, "I have now, with a feeling of awe befitting this sacred place, thus given you, in the first part of my lecture, a succinct view of the origin, rise, and growth of the globe on which, as the poet has justly said, 'we dwell.' I have shown you — corroborating

Scripture — the earth, without form and void, the awful monsters of the Silurian age, and Man in the Garden of Eden.

“ I now invite you to journey with me — as one has said — ‘ across the continent.’

“ Travelling has ever been viewed as a means of education. Thus Athenian sages sought the learning of the Orient. Thus may we this evening, without toil or peril, or expense beyond the fifteen cents already incurred for the admission-fee, journey in spirit from the wild Atlantic to the sunset coast. In the words of the sacred lyrist, Edgar A. Poe, ‘ My country, ’t is of thee,’ that I shall now display some views.

“ Of course we start from Boston. On the way to New York, we will first pause to view the scene where Putnam galloped down a flight of steps, beneath the hostile fire. See both mane and coat-tails flying in the wind, and the eyes of steed and rider wildly dilated with excitement.

“ Next we pause in Brooklyn. And from my immense variety of scenes in the City of Churches, I choose the firemen’s monument in Greenwood Cemetery.

‘Here they lie low who raised their ladders high ;
Here they still live,— for heroes cannot die !’

[A voice: “ How many are buried there ? ”]

“ I should say, at a venture, eighteen. [A rustle of sympathy among the women.]

“ Passing on, and coming thence to the metropolis of New York, I am greatly embarrassed, so vast is the richness and variety of views. But I will show first the ‘ Five Points.’ [Great eagerness, and cries, “ Down front ! ”] Of late, philanthropy and religion, walking in sweet converse, hand in hand, have relieved the horrors of this region, and now one may walk there comparatively safe. [Sudden cessation of interest.]

“ I will give even another view of the metropolis: a charming scene in Central Park. [Here wavered dimly on the screen five bushes, and a nursery-maid with a baby-carriage.] From this exquisite picture you may gain some faint idea of the charms of that Paradise raised by the wand of taste and skill in a waste of arid sands.

“ Passing westward, I next present the Suspension Bridge at Niagara, erected by drawing

over the majestic stream a cord, a small rope, then a wire, until the whole vast framework was complete. The idea was taken from the spider's web. Thus the humblest may guide the highest; and I love to recall, in this connection, that the lamented Lincoln, some years before signing the Emancipation Proclamation, heard me lecture on slavery, in Peoria.

"Next we come to Cleveland; and our attention is seized by three cannons taken in the famous naval battle on the lake. Every visitor pauses here, and with uncovered head and eyes suffused with tears recalls the sacrifices of the Fathers.

"Next we view Chicago the morning after the fire; on every hand are blackened ruins, — painful proofs of the vicissitudes of human fortune! [A voice: "I was there at the time."] I am delighted to know it. Such spontaneous corroboration from the audience is to the lecturer's heart as a draught from the well of Baca. [Laughter, and a voice: "What Baker?"]

"But, in order to cross so broad a continent, we must not dally, and next I show you the

Mormon Temple in Salt Lake City, the seat of a defiant system of sin. All things, however, have their uses, and I can recommend this religion to any young lady present who does not find it easy to secure a helpmeet. [Appreciative laughter.]

“And now, for a view of the Pacific States, I choose two of the famed Big Trees. Judge of them by the two men who stand, like the Widow’s mites, beside them. These trees are called ‘Father and Daughter.’ [A voice: “Which is Father, and which is Daughter?”] I am not informed, but from their appearance I judge that the nearer is the Father. [Derisive laughter.]

“And now we approach a climax.

“When the Ten Thousand, in their storied march, reached at last the blue waters of the Euxine, thrilled with joy they loudly cried: ‘The Sea! The Sea!’ So we, travellers likewise, reach at last the Western Ocean; and for a striking scene upon its waters, I present a Pacific Mail steamer at her dock in the harbor of San Francisco. In the left foreground is a Chinese laundry. And now I can hardly restrain myself

from passing on to Asia; for imagination, taking fire, beckons to Niphon and the Flowery Kingdom. But remorseless Time says no, and we pause at the Golden Gate.

“ In closing, now, I will, as is usual, give one or two moral views, relieved by others of a somewhat playful character.

“ First is Napoleon’s grave. He who held Europe struggling in his hand, died a prisoner in solitudes remote, far from home endearments.

“ Next you see Daniel Lambert, whose greatness was of a more solid cast. Less grasping in his pretensions than Napoleon, he lived an honored life, and died, I understand, among his relatives.

“ Next is a picture of the guillotine, calling up thoughts of severed heads from memory’s cloisters. On the left you see a ghastly head; on the right the decapitated trunk. By the victim stand the bloody actors in the tragedy. Ladies and gentlemen! When I review the awful guilt of Marat and Robespierre, humbly do I give thanks that I have been kept from yielding, like them, to fierce ambition and lust of power, and

that I can lay my head upon a peaceful pillow at my home in Fall River.

“Next is the Serenade. Part one: The Spanish lover with bow-knot shoes, pointed hat, and mantle over shoulder, stands, with his lute, on the covered water-butt, while at the casement above is his lady’s charming face. Part two: The head of the water-butt has given way, and the angry father, from his window, beholds a scene of luckless misery.

“I turn now to a more pleasing view, — the Village Blacksmith. The mighty man is at his work, and by a triumph of art I am enabled to show his fine physique in action: now you see his arm uplifted, — and now the hammer is on the iron. Up — down — up — down. [A voice: “There are two right arms!”] That arises from some slight defect in the arrangement of the light; the uplifted arm does not entirely vanish when the lowered arm appears. But to the thoughtful observer, such slight contrasts only heighten enjoyment.

“Ladies and gentlemen! A single word in closing. Our transcontinental journey this evening ended at the Golden Gate. When life’s

journey ends, may we not so pause, but, as the poet Judson Backus sweetly sings: —

‘ May we find an angel wait
To lead us through the “golden gate.” ’

“ Meanwhile, adieu.”

David Prince and his wife walked slowly home in the clear, cold moonlight.

“ Did you notice,” said Delia, “ how the man kept saying that he didn’t know just what to pick out, to show? Well, I heard the Kelley boy, that helped at the lamps, say that they showed every identical picture there was. I suppose they are a lot of odds and ends he picked up at an auction.”

“ I think he was a kind of a humbug,” said Calvin Green, who, with his wife, had come up close behind. “ See how he kept dragging in his morals, jes like overhauling a trawl and taking off a haddock, every once in so often.”

“ What a way to travel,” said his wife; “ to go ker-jump from New York City to Niagara, and from there to Cleveland. He must have thought we had long stilts.”

"The pictures were rather here and there and everywhere, to be sure," said David; "but I have a good deal of charity for these men; I s'pose they 're put to it for bread and butter."

"Well, I don't know," said Green; "I don't think it has a good influence on young people to show such a picture as that man that they murdered by slicing his head off with that machine. I don't like such things to be brought up."

"I should think the opposite," said his wife, laughing, "by the way you 've told every man in town about David's money, and the way he blanched when he missed it. I think you 'd better take a lesson yourself about bringing up dreadful things."

When they reached Green's house, a low, black cottage, they stopped a moment for the women to finish a discussion about croup.

"How did that look to you now, David?" said Green. "Did n't you think it would have been a good deal better to have left that picture out?"

"Which one?" said David.

"Why, the one where they'd chopped the man's head off with that machine, and were standing by, looking at the corpse. I don't like to see such things, for my part."

"I don't know," said David. "I didn't think about it particularly. I understood it was in the French Revolution."

"Well, see all that flummer-diddle he got off about it," said Green; "just as if any fool didn't know that a man couldn't sleep that was haunted by a thing like that."

"Well, some can stomach anything, and I suppose some can sleep on anything," said David. "I guess it would take more than slicing one man's head off to make that Jew lie awake nights. If he'd only admitted that I'd been there! But as soon as I said I'd left something, then for him and his wife to claim they never saw me! They're cool ones!"

"Well, right here, — about what my wife flung out," said Green, glancing over his shoulder to where the women were talking, both at once, woman-fashion; "you know my wife's way, — you haven't ever heard any such talk going round, have you, as that I was hounding folks

about your bad luck? I say an honest man speaks right out,— no fear, no favor. Ain't that so?"

It was a bitterly cold, clear night, a few weeks later. Runners squeaked and boot-heels crunched in the road. David had passed Green's house at seven o'clock, going to the store; he always went by there at that time, Saturdays, and passed again, returning home, at about eight.

When he reached the gate, on his return, Green was standing there, apparently waiting.

"Come into the house a minute, David," he said; "I want to see you."

He led him into the kitchen.

"My wife's gone over to Aunt Nathan's for the evening," he said.

He shut the door, and locked it.

"There!" he said; "I can't stand it any longer;" and he laid upon a table at David's side a wallet. David took it up and opened it; it held a great roll of bills.

"What does this mean?" he said; "why — this is mine! You don't mean —"

"I mean I stole it," said Green.

David sat down. "I wish you had put it in the fire," he said, "and never told me."

"There's just one thing I want to say," said Green. "I picked it up, first, to give it to you, and when I saw that you'd forgot it, I thought I'd have a little joke on you for a while; and then, when I saw how things was going, I kind o' drifted into keeping it. You know how I come home,— all my voyage eat up, and a hundred dollars' debts besides, and children sick. But every dollar's there.

"Now, what I ask," he added, "is four days' time to ship and get away. What are you going to do?"

"Nothing," said David; "settle your debts and pay me when you can." And taking five twenty-dollar bills from the wallet, he left them on the table and went away.



THE VILLAGE CONVICT.

“WONDER ‘f Eph’s got back; they say his sentence run out yesterdæy.”

The speaker, John Doane, was a sunburnt fisherman, one of a circle of well-salted individuals who sat, some on chairs, some on boxes and barrels, around the stove in a country store.

“Yes,” said Captain Seth, a middle-aged little man with ear-rings; “he come on the stage to-noon. Would n’t hardly speak a word, Jim says. Looked kind o’ sot and sober.”

“Wall,” said the first speaker, “I only hope he won’t go to burnin’ us out of house and home, same as he burnt up Eliphælt’s barn. I was ruther in hopes he’d ‘a’ made off West. Seems to me I should, in his place, hevin’ ben in State’s-prison.”

“Now, I allers hed quite a parcel o’ sympathy for Eph,” said a short, thickset coasting cap-

tain, who sat tilted back in a three-legged chair, smoking lazily. "You see, he wa'n't but about twenty-one or two then, and he was allers a mighty high-strung boy; and then Eliphilet did act putty ha'sh, foreclosin' on Eph's mother, and turnin' her out o' the farm in winter, when everybody knew she could ha' pulled through by waitin'. Eph sot great store by the old lady; and I expect he was putty mad with Eliphilet that night."

"I allers," said Doane, "approved o' his plan o' leadin' out all the critters, 'fore he touched off the barn. 'T ain't everybody 't would hev taken pains to do that. But all the same, I tell Sarai 't I feel kind o' skittish, nights, to hev to turn in, feelin' 't there's a convict in the place."

"I hain't got no barn to burn," said Captain Seth; "but if he allots my hen-house to the flames, I hope he'll lead out the hens and hitch 'em to the apple-trees, same's he did Eliphilet's critters. Think he ought to deal ekally by all."

A mild general chuckle greeted this sally, cheered by which the speaker added, —

"Thought some o' takin' out a policy o' insurance on my cockerel."

"Trade's lookin' up, William," said Captain Seth to the storekeeper, as some one was heard to kick the snow off his boots on the door-step. "Somebody's found he's got to hev a shoe-string 'fore mornin'."

The door opened, and closed behind a strongly-made man of twenty-six or seven, of homely features, with black hair, in clothes which he had outgrown. It was a bitter night, but he had no coat over his flannel jacket. He walked straight down the store, between the dry-goods counters, to the snug corner at the rear, where the knot of talkers sat; nodded, without a smile, to each of them, and then asked the storekeeper for some simple articles of food, which he wished to buy. It was Eph.

While the purchases were being put up, an awkward silence prevailed, which the oil-suits hanging on the walls, broadly displaying their arms and legs, seemed to mock, in dumb show.

Nothing was changed, to Eph's eyes, as he

looked about. Even the handbill of familiar pattern —

“STANDING WOOD FOR SALE.
APPLY TO J. CARTER, ADMIN’R,”

seemed to have always been there.

The village parliament remained spellbound. Mr. Adams tied up the purchases, and mildly inquired, —

“Shall I charge this?”

Not that he was anxious to open an account, but that he would probably have gone to the length of selling Eph a barrel of molasses “on tick” rather than run any risk of offending so formidable a character.

“No,” said Eph; “I will pay for the things.”

And having put the packages into a canvas bag, and selected some fish-hooks and lines from the show-case, where they lay environed by jack-knives, jews-harps, and gum-drops, — dear to the eyes of childhood, — he paid what was due, said “Good-night, William,” to the storekeeper, and walked steadily out into the night.

“Wall,” said the skipper, “I am surprised! I strove to think o’ suthin’ to say, all the time

he was here, but I swow I could n't think o' nothin'. I could n't ask him if it seemed good to git home, nor how the thermometer had varied in different parts o' the town where he 'd been. Everything seemed to fetch right up standin' to the State's-prison."

"I was just goin' to say, 'How 'd ye leave everybody?'" said Doane; "but that kind o' seemed to bring up them he 'd left. I felt real bad, though, to hev the feller go off 'thout none on us speakin' to him. He 's got a hard furrer to plough; and yet I don't s'pose there 's much harm in him, 'f Eliphilet only keeps quiet."

"Eliphilet!" said a young sailor, contemptuously. "No fear o' him! They say he 's so sca't of Eph he hain't hardly swallowed nothin' for a week."

"But where will he live?" asked a short, curly-haired young man, whom Eph had seemed not to recognize. It was the new doctor, who, after having made his way through college and the great medical school in Boston, had, two years before, settled in this village.

"I believe," said Mr. Adams, rubbing his

hands, "that he wrote to Joshua Carr last winter, when his mother died, not to let the little place she left, on the Salt Hay Road; and I understand that he is going to make his home there. It is an old house, you know, and not worth much, but it is weather-tight, I should say."

"Speakin' of his writin' to Joshua," said Doane, "I have heard such a sound as that he used to shine up to Joshua's Susan, years back. But that's all ended now. You won't catch Susan marryin' no jailbirds."

"But how will he live?" said the doctor. "Will anybody give him work?"

"Let him alone for livin'," said Doane. "He can ketch more fish than any other two men in the place—allers seemed to kind o' hev a knack o' whistlin' 'em right into the boat. And then Nelson Briggs, that settled up his mother's estate, allows he's got over a hundred and ten dollars for him, after payin' debts and all probate expenses. That and the place is all he needs to start on."

"I will go to see him," said the doctor to himself, as he went out upon the requisition of a

grave man in a red tippet, who had just come for him. "He does n't look so very dangerous, and I think he can be tamed. I remember that his mother told me about him."

Late that night, returning from his seven miles' drive, as he left the causeway, built across a wide stretch of salt-marsh, crossed the rattling plank bridge, and ascended the hill, he saw a light in the cottage window, where he had often been to attend Aunt Lois. "I will stop now," said he. And, tying his horse to the front fence, he went toward the kitchen door. As he passed the window, he glanced in. A lamp was burning on the table. On a settle, lying upon his face, was stretched the convict, his arms beneath his head. The canvas bag lay on the floor beside him. "I will not disturb him now," said the doctor.

A few days later Dr. Burt was driving in his sleigh with his wife along the Salt Hay Road. It was a clear, crisp winter forenoon. As they neared Eph's house, he said,—

"Mary, suppose I lay siege to the fort this morning. I see a curl of smoke rising from the

little shop in the barn. He must be making himself a jimmy or a dark-lantern to break into our vegetable cellar with."

"Well," said she, "I think it would be a good plan; only, you know, you must be very, very careful not to hint, even in the faintest way, at his imprisonment. You must n't so much as *suspect* that he has ever been away from the place. People hardly dare to speak to him, for fear he will see some reference to his having been in prison, and get angry."

"You shall see my sly tact," said her husband, laughing. "I will be as innocent as a lamb. I will ask him why I have not seen him at the Sabbath-school this winter."

"You may make fun," said she, "but you will end by taking my advice, all the same. Now, do be careful what you say."

"I will," he replied. "I will compose my remarks carefully upon the back of an envelope and read them to him, so as to be absolutely sure. I will leave on his mind an impression that I have been in prison, and that he was the judge that tried me."

He drove in at the open gate, hitched his

horse in a warm corner by the kitchen door, and then stopped for a moment to enjoy the view. The situation of the little house, half a mile from any other, was beautiful in summer, but it was bleak enough in winter. In the small front dooryard stood three lofty, wind-blown poplars, all heading away from the sea, and between them you could look down the bay or across the salt-marshes, while in the opposite direction were to be seen the roofs and the glittering spires of the village.

“It is social for him here, to say the least,” said the doctor, as he turned and walked alone to the shop. He opened the door and went in. It was a long, low lean-to, such as farmers often furnish for domestic work with a carpenter’s bench, a grindstone, and a few simple tools. It was lighted by three square windows above the bench. An air-tight stove, projecting its funnel through a hole in one of the panes, gave out a cheerful crackling.

Eph, in his shirt-sleeves, his hands in his pockets, was standing, his back against the bench, surveying, with something of a mechanic’s eye, the frame of a boat which was set up on the floor.

He looked up and colored slightly. The doctor took out a cigarette, lit it, sat down on the bench, and smoked, clasping one knee in his hands and eying the boat.

“Centre-board?” he asked, at length.

“Yes,” said Eph.

“Cat-rig?”

“Yes.”

“Going fishing?”

“Yes.”

“Alone?”

“Yes.”

“I was brought up to sail a boat,” said the doctor, “and I go fishing in summer — when I get a chance. I shall try your boat, some time.”

No reply.

“The timbers are n’t seasoned, are they? They look like pitch-pine, just out of the woods. Won’t they warp?”

“No. Pitch-pine goes right in, green. I s’pose the pitch keeps it, if it’s out of the sun.”

“Where did you cut it?”

Eph colored a little.

“In my back lot.”

The doctor smoked on calmly, and studied the boat.

"I don't know as I know you," said Eph, relaxing a little.

"Good reason," said the doctor. "I've only been here two years;" and after a moment's pause, he added: "I am the doctor here, now. You've heard of my father, Dr. Burt, of Broad River?"

Eph nodded assent; everybody knew him, all through the country,—a fatherly old man, who rode on long journeys at everybody's call, and never sent in his bills.

The visitor had a standing with Eph at once.

"Doctors never pick at folks," he said to himself — "at any rate, not old Dr. Burt's son."

"I used to come here to see your mother," said the doctor, "when she was sick. She used to talk a great deal about you, and said she wanted me to get acquainted with you, when your time was out."

Eph started, but said nothing.

"She was a good woman, Aunt Lois," added the doctor; "one of the best women I ever saw."

"I don't want anybody to bother himself on my account," said Eph. "I ask no favors."

"You will have to take favors, though," said the doctor, "before the winter is over. You will be careless and get sick; you have been living for a long time entirely in-doors, with regular hours and work and food. Now you are going to live out-of-doors, and get your own meals, irregularly. You didn't have on a thick coat the other night, when I saw you at the store."

"I have n't got any that's large enough for me," said Eph, a little less harshly, "and I've got to keep my money for other things."

"Then look out and wear flannel shirts enough," said the doctor, "if you want to be independent. But before I go, I want to go into the house. I want my wife to see Aunt Lois's room, and the view from the west window;" and he led the way to the sleigh.

Eph hesitated a moment, and then followed him.

"Mary, this is Ephraim Morse. We are going in to see the Dutch tiles I have told you of."

She smiled as she held out her mittenend hand to Eph, who took it awkwardly.

The square front room, which had been originally intended for a keeping-room, but had been Aunt Lois's bedroom, looked out from two windows upon the road, and from two upon the rolling, tumbling bay, and the shining sea beyond. A tall clock, with a rocking ship above the face, ticked in the corner. The painted floor with bright rag mats, the little table with a lacquer work-box, the stiff chairs and the old-fashioned bedstead, the china ornaments upon the mantel-piece, the picture of "The Emeline G. in the Harbor of Canton," were just as they had been when the patient invalid had lain there, looking from her pillow out to sea. In twelve rude tiles, set around the open fireplace, the Hebrews were seen in twelve stages of their escape from Egypt. It would appear from this representation that they had not restricted their borrowings to the jewels of their oppressors, but had taken for the journey certain Dutch clothing of the fashion of the seventeenth century. The scenery, too, was much like that about Leyden.

"I think," said the doctor's wife, "that the painter was just a little absent-minded when he

put in that beer-barrel. And a wharf, by the Red Sea!"

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"I wish you would conclude to rig your boat with a new sail," said the doctor, as he took up the reins, at parting. "There is n't a boat here that's kept clean, and I should like to hire yours once or twice a week in summer, if you keep her as neat as you do your house. Come in and see me some evening, and we'll talk it over."

Eph built his boat, and, in spite of his evident dislike of visitors, the inside finish and the arrangements of the little cabin were so ingenious and so novel that everybody had to pay him a visit.

True to his plan of being independent, he built in the side of the hill, near his barn, by a little gravelly pond, an ice-house, and with the hardest labor filled it, all by himself. With this supply, he would not have to go to the general wharf at Sandy Point to sell his fish, with the other men, but could pack and ship them himself. And he could do better, in this way,

he thought, even after paying for teaming them to the cars.

The knowing ones laughed to see that, from asking no advice, he had miscalculated and laid in three times as much as he could use.

“ Guess Eph cal’lates to fish with two lines in each hand an’ another ‘n his teeth,” said Mr. Wing. “ He’s plannin’ out for a great lay o’ fish.”

The spring came slowly on, and the first boat that went out that season was Eph’s. That day was one of unmixed delight to him. What a sense of absolute freedom, when he was fairly out beyond the lightship, with the fresh swiftness of the wind in his face! What an exquisite consciousness of power and control, as his boat went beating through the long waves! Two or three men from another village sailed across his wake. His boat lay over, almost showing her keel, now high out of water, now settling between the waves, while Eph stood easily in the stern, in his shirt-sleeves, backing against the tiller, smoking a pipe, and ranging the waters with his eyes.

“ Takes it natural ag’in, don’t he? Stands as

easy as ef he was loafin' on a wharf," said one of the observers. "Expect it's quite a treat to be out. But they do say he's gittin' everybody's good opinion. They looked for a reg'-lar ruffi'n when he come home,— cuttin' nets, killin' cats, chasin' hens, gittin' drunk! They say Eliphilet Wood didn't hardly dare to go ou' doors for a month, 'thout havin' his hired man along. But he's turned out as peaceful as a little gal."

One June day, as Eph was slitting blue-fish at the little pier which he had built on the bay shore, near his rude ice-house, two men came up.

"Hullo, Eph!"

"Hullo!"

"We've got about sick, tradin' down to the wharf; we can't git no fair show. About one time in three, they tell us they don't want our fish, and won't take 'em unless we heave 'em in for next to nothin', — and we know there ain't no sense in it. So we just thought we'd slip down and see 'f you would n't take 'em, seein's you've got ice, and send 'em up with yourn."

Eph was taken all aback with this mark of confidence. The offer must be declined. It evidently sprang from some mere passing vexation.

"I can't buy fish," said he. "I have no scales to weigh 'em."

"Then send ourn in separate berrels," said one of the men.

"But I have n't any money to pay you," he said. "I only get my pay once a month."

"We'll git tick at William's, and you can settle 'th us when you git your pay."

"Well," said he, unable to refuse, "I'll take 'em, if you say so."

Before the season was over, he had still another customer, and could have had three or four more, if he had had ice enough. He felt strongly inclined that fall to build a larger ice-house; and although he was a little afraid of bringing ridicule upon himself in case no fish should be brought to him the next summer, he decided to do so, on the assurance of three or four men that they meant to come to him. Nobody else had such a chance,—a pond right by the shore.

One evening there was a knock at the door

of Eliphilet Wood, the owner of the burned barn. Eliphilet went to the door, but turned pale at seeing Eph there.

“Oh, come in, come in!” he panted. “Glad to see you. Walk in. Have a chair. Take a seat. Sit down.”

But he thought his hour had come: he was alone in the house, and there was no neighbor within call.

Eph took out a roll of bills, counted out eighty dollars, laid the money on the table, and said quietly,—

“Give me a receipt on account.”

When it was written he walked out, leaving Eliphilet stupefied.

Joshua Carr was at work, one June afternoon, by the roadside, in front of his low cottage, by an enormous pile of poles, which he was shaving down for barrel-hoops, when Eph appeared.

“Hard at it, Joshuā!” he said.

“Yes, yes!” said Joshua, looking up through his steel-bowed spectacles. “Hev to work hard to make a livin’—though I don’t know’s I ought to call it hard, neither; and yet it is

ruther hard, too; but then, on 't other hand, 't ain't so hard as a good many other things—though there is a good many jobs that's easier. That's so! that's so!

‘Must we be kerried to the skies
On feathery beds of ease?’

Though I don't know 's I ought to quote a hymn on such a matter; but then—I don' know 's there's any partic'lar harm in't, neither.”

Eph sat down on a pile of shavings and chewed a sliver; and the old man kept on at his work.

“Hoop-poles goin' up and hoops goin' down,” he continued. “Cur'us, ain't it? But then, I don' know as 't is; woods all bein' cut off—poles gittin' scurcer—hoops bein' shoved in from Down East. That don't seem just right, now, does it? But then, other folks must make a livin', too. Still, I should think they might take up suthin' else; and yet, they might say that about me. Understand, I don't mean to say that they actually do say so; I don't want to run down any man unless I know—”

“I can't stand this,” said Eph to himself; “I don't wonder that they always used to put

Joshua off at the first port, when he tried to go coasting. They said he talked them crazy with nothing.

"I'll go into the house and see Aunt Lyddy," he said aloud. "I'm loafing, this afternoon."

"All right! all right!" said Joshua. "Lyddy'll be glad to see you — that is, as glad as she would be to see anybody," he added, reaching out for a pole. "Now, I don't s'pose that sounds very well; but still, you know how she is — she allers likes to hev folks to talk, and then she's allers sayin' talkin' wears on her; but I ought not to say that to you, because she allers likes to see you — that is, as much as she likes to see anybody. In fact, I think, on the whole —"

"Well, I'll take my chances," said Eph, laughing; and he opened the gate and went in.

Joshua's wife, whom everybody called Aunt Lyddy, was rocking in a high-backed-chair in the kitchen, and knitting. It was currently reported that Joshua's habit of endlessly retracting and qualifying every idea and modification of an idea which he advanced, so as to commit himself to nothing, was the effect of Aunt Lyddy's careful revision.

"I s'pose she thought 'twas fun to be talked deef when they was courtin'," Captain Seth had once sagely remarked. "Prob'lly it sounded then like a putty piece on a seraphine; but I allers cal'lated she'd git her fill of it, sooner or later. You most gin'lly git your fill o' one tune."

"How are you this afternoon, Aunt Lyddy?" asked Eph, walking in without knocking, and sitting down near her.

"So as to be able to keep about," she replied. "It is a great mercy I ain't afflicted with falling out of my chair, like Hepsy Jones, ain't it?"

"I've brought you some oysters," he said. "I set the basket down on the door-step. I just took them out of the water myself from the bed I planted to the west of the water-fence."

"I always heard you was a great fisherman," said Aunt Lyddy, "but I had no idea you would ever come here and boast of being able to catch oysters. Poor things! How could they have got away? But why don't you bring them in? They won't be afraid of me, will they?"

He stepped to the door and brought in a peck

basket full of large, black, twisted shells, and with a heavy clasp-knife proceeded to open one, and took out a great oyster, which he held up on the point of the blade.

“Try it,” he said; and then Aunt Lyddy, after she had swallowed it, laughed to think what a tableau they had made,—a man who had been in the State’s-prison standing over her with a great knife! And then she laughed again.

“What are you laughing at?” he said.

“It popped into my head, supposing Susan should have looked in at the south window and Joshua in at the door, when you was feeding out that oyster to me, what they would have thought!”

Eph laughed too; and, surely enough, just then a stout, light-haired, rather plain-looking young woman came up to the south window and leaned in. She had on a sun-bonnet, which had not prevented her from securing a few choice freckles. She had been working with a trowel in her flower-garden.

“What’s the matter?” she said, nodding easily to Eph. “What do you two always find to laugh about?”

"Ephraim was feeding me with spoon-meat," said Aunt Lyddy, pointing to the basket, which looked like a basket of anthracite coal.

"It looks like spoon-meat!" said Susan, and then she laughed too. "I'll roast some of them for supper," she added,— "a new way that I know."

Eph was not invited to stay to supper, but he stayed, none the less: that was always understood.

"Well, well, well!" said Joshua, coming to the door-step, and washing his hands and arms just outside, in a tin basin. "I thought I see you set down a parcel of oysters — but there was sea-weed over 'em, and I don' know's I could have said they was oysters; but then, if the square question had been put to me, 'Mr. Carr, be them oysters or be they not?' I s'pose I should have said they was; still, if they'd asked me how I knew —"

"Come, come, father!" said Aunt Lyddy, "do give poor Ephraim a little peace. Why don't you just say you thought they were oysters, and done with it?"

"Say I *thought* they was?" he replied, inno-

cently. "I knew well enough they was — that is — knew? No, I didn't know, but —"

Aunt Lyddy, with an air of mock resignation, gave up, while Joshua endeavored to fix, to a hair, the exact extent of his knowledge.

Eph smiled; but he remembered what would have made him pardon, a thousand times over, the old man's garrulousness. He remembered who alone had never failed, once a year, to visit a certain prisoner, at the cost of a long and tiresome journey, and who had written to that homesick prisoner kind and cheering letters, and had sent him baskets of simple dainties for holidays.

Susan bustled about, and made a fire of crackling sticks; and began to roast the oysters in a way that made a most savory smell. She set the table, and then sat down at the melodeon, while she was waiting, and sang a hymn; for she was of a musical turn, and was one of the choir. Then she jumped up and took out the steaming oysters, and they all sat down.

"Well, well, well!" said her father; "these be good! I didn't s'pose you hed any very good oysters in your bed, Ephraim. But there,

now — I don't s'pose I ought to have said that; that was n't very polite; but what I meant was, I did n't s'pose you hed any that was *real* good — though I don' know but I 've said about the same thing, now. Well, any way, these be splendid; they 're full as good as those cohogs we had t'other night."

"Quahaugs!" said Susan. "The idea of comparing these oysters with quahaugs!"

"Well, well! that 's so!" said her father. "I did n't say right, did I, when I said that! Of course, there ain't no 'comparison — that is — *no* comparison? Why, of course, they *is* a comparison between everything, — but then, cohogs don't really compare with oysters! That 's true!"

And then he paused to eat a few.

He was silent so long at this occupation that they all laughed.

"Well, well!" he said, laying down his fork, and smiling innocently; "what be you all laughin' at? Not but what I allers like to hev folks laugh — but then, I did n't see nothin' to laugh at. Still, perhaps they was suthin' to laugh at that I did n't see; sometimes one

man 'll be lookin' down into his plate, all taken up with his victuals, and others, that 's lookin' around the room, may see the kittens frolickin', or some such thing. 'T ain't the fust time I 've known all hands to laugh all to once-t, when I didn't see nothin'."

Susan helped him again, and secured another brief respite.

"Ephraim," said he, after a while, "you ain't skilled to cook oysters like this, I don't believe. You ought to git married! I was sayin' to Susan t'other day — well, now, mother, hev I said anything out o' the way? Well, I don't s'pose 't was just my place to have said anything about gitt'n' married, to Ephraim, seein's — "

"Come, come, father," said Aunt Lyddy, "that'll do, now. You must let Ephraim alone, and not joke him about such things."

Meanwhile Susan had hastily gone into the pantry to look for a pie, which she seemed unable at once to find.

"Pie got adrift?" called out Joshua. "Seems to me you don't hook on to it very quick. Now that looks good," he added, when she came out.

“That looks like cookin’! All I meant was, ‘t Ephraim ought not to be doin’ his own cookin’ — that is, ‘f you can call it cookin’. But then, of course, ‘tis cookin’— there’s all kinds o’ cookin’. I went cook myself, when I was a boy.”

After supper, Aunt Lyddy sat down to knit, and Joshua drew his chair up to an open window, to smoke his pipe. In this vice Aunt Lyddy encouraged him. The odor of Virginia tobacco was a sweet savor in her nostrils. No breezes from Araby ever awoke more grateful feelings than did the fragrance of Uncle Joshua’s pipe. To Aunt Lyddy it meant quiet and peace.

Susan and Eph sat down on the broad flag door-stone, and talked quietly of the simple news of the neighborhood, and of the days when they used to go to school, and come home, always together.

“I didn’t much think then,” said Eph, “that I should ever bring up where I have, and get ashore before I was fairly out to sea!”

“Jehiel’s schooner got ashore on the bar, years ago,” said Susan, “and yet they towed

her off, and I saw her this morning, from my chamber window, before sunrise, all sail set, going by to the eastward."

"I know what you mean," said Eph. "But here—I got mad once, and I almost had a right to, and I can't get started again; I never shall. I can get a living, of course; but I shall always be pointed out as a jailbird, and could no more get any footing in the world than Portuguese Jim."

Portuguese Jim was the sole professional criminal of the town,—a weak, good-natured, knock-kneed vagabond, who stole hens, and spent every winter in the House of Correction as an "idle and disorderly person."

Susan laughed outright at the picture. Eph smiled too, but a little bitterly.

"I suppose it was more ugliness than anything else," he said, "that made me come back here to live, where everybody knows I've been in jail and is down on me."

"They are not down on you," said Susan. "Nobody is down on you. It's all your own imagination. And if you had gone anywhere that you was a stranger, you know that the first

thing that you would have done would have been to call a meeting and tell all the people that you had burned down a man's barn and been in the State's-prison, and that you wanted them all to know it at the start ; and you wouldn't have told them why you did it, and how young you was then, and how Eliphilet treated your mother, and how you was going to pay him for all he lost. Here, everybody knows that side of it. In fact," she added, with a little twinkle in her eye, "I have sometimes had an idea that the main thing they don't like is, to see you saving every cent to pay to Eliphilet."

"And yet it was on your say that I took up that plan," said Eph. "I never thought of it till you asked me when I was going to begin to pay him up."

"And you ought to," said Susan. "He has a right to the money—and then, you don't want to be under obligations to that man all your life. Now, what you want to do is to cheer up and go around among folks. Why, now you're the only fish-buyer there is that the men don't watch when he's weighing their

fish. You'll own up to that, for one thing, won't you?"

"Well, they are good fellows that bring fish to me," he said.

"They weren't good fellows when they traded at the great wharf," said Susan. "They had a quarrel down there once a week, regularly."

"Well, suppose they do trust me in that," said Eph. "I can never rub out that I've been in State's-prison."

"You don't want to rub it out. You can't rub anything out that's ever been; but you can do better than rub it out."

"What do you mean?"

"Take things just the way they are," said Susan, "and show what can be done. Perhaps you'll stake a new channel out for others to follow in, that haven't half so much chance as you have. And that's what you will do, too," she added.

"Susan!" he said, "if there's anything I can ever do, in this world or the next, for you or your folks, that's all I ask for,—the chance to do it. Your folks and you shall never want for anything while I'm alive.

"There's one thing sure," he added, rising. "I'll live by myself and be independent of everybody, and make my way all alone in the world; and if I can make 'em all finally own up and admit that I'm honest with 'em, I'm satisfied. That's all I'll ever ask of anybody. But there's one thing that worries me sometimes, — that is, whether I ought to come here so often. I'm afraid, sometimes, that it'll hinder your father from gettin' work, or — something — for you folks to be friends with me."

"I think such things take care of themselves," said Susan, quietly. "If a chip won't float, let it sink."

"Good-night," said Eph; and he walked off, and went home to his echoing house.

After that, his visits to Joshua's became less frequent.

It was a bright day in March, — one of those which almost redeem the reputation of that desperado of a month. Eph was leaning on his fence, looking now down the bay and now to where the sun was sinking in the marshes. He knew that all the other men had gone to the

town-meeting, where he had had no heart to intrude himself,— that free democratic parliament where he had often gone with his father in childhood; where the boys, rejoicing in a general assembly of their own, had played ball outside, while the men debated gravely within. He recalled the time when he himself had so proudly given his first vote for President, and how his father had introduced him then to friends from distant parts of the town. He remembered how he had heard his father speak there, and how respectfully everybody had listened to him. That was in the long ago, when they had lived at the great farm. And then came the thought of the mortgage, and of Eliphilet's foreclosure, and —

“ Hullo, Eph ! ”

It was one of the men from whom he took fish,— a plain-spoken, sincere little man.

“ Why wa’n’t you down to town-meet’n’? ”

“ I was busy,” said Eph.

“ How ’d ye like the news? ”

“ What news? ”

There was never any good news for him now.

“ Hain’t heard who ’s elected town-clerk? ”

“No.”

Had they elected Eliphilet, and so expressed their settled distrust of him, and sympathy for the man whom he had injured?

“Who is elected?” he asked harshly.

“You be!” said the man; “went in flyin’, — all hands clappin’ and stompin’ their feet!”

An hour later the doctor drove up, stopped, and walked toward the kitchen door. As he passed the window, he looked in.

Eph was lying on his face, upon the settle, as he had first seen him there, his arms beneath his head.

“I will not disturb him now,” said the doctor.

One breezy afternoon, in the following summer, Captain Seth laid aside his easy every-day clothes, and transformed himself into a stiff broadcloth image, with a small silk hat and creaking boots. So attired, he set out in a high open buggy, with his wife, also in black, but with gold spectacles, to the funeral of an aunt. As they pursued their jog-trot journey along the

Salt Hay Road, and came to Ephraim Morse's cottage, they saw Susan sitting in a shady little porch at the front door, shelling peas and looking down the bay.

"How is everything, Susan?" called out Captain Seth; "'bout time for Eph to be gitt'n in?"

"Yes," she answered, nodding and smiling, and pointing with a pea-pod; "that's our boat, just coming to the wharf, with her peak down."



SAINT PATRICK.

I.

ONE of the places which they point out on Ship Street is the Italian fruit-shop on the corner of Perry Court, before the door of which, six years ago, Giuseppe Cavagnaro, bursting suddenly forth in pursuit of Martin Lavezzo, stabbed him in the back, upon the sidewalk. "All two" of them were to blame, so the witnesses said; but Cavagnaro went to prison for fifteen years. That was the same length of time, as it happened, that the feud had lasted.

Nearly opposite is Sarah Ward's New Albion dance-hall. It opens directly from the street. There is an orchestra of three pieces, one of which plays in tune. That calm and collected woman whom you may see rocking in the window, or sitting behind the bar, sewing or knit-

ting, is not a city missionary, come to instruct the women about her; it is Sarah Ward, the proprietress. She knows the Bible from end to end. She was a Sunday-school teacher once; she had a class of girls; she spoke in prayer-meetings; she had a framed Scripture motto in her chamber, and she took the Teachers' Lesson Quarterly; she visited the sick; she prayed in secret for her scholars' conversion. How she came to change her views of life nobody knows, — that is to say, not everybody knows. And still she is honest. It is her pride that sailors are not drugged and robbed in the New Albion.

A few doors below, and on the same side of the street, is the dance-hall that was Bose King's. It is here that pleasure takes on its most sordid aspect. If you wish to see how low a white woman can fall, how coarse and offensive a negro man can be, you will come here. There is an inscription on the bar, in conspicuous letters, — "Welcome Home."

By day it is comparatively still in Ship Street. Women with soulless faces loll stolidly in the open ground-floor windows. There are few customers in the bar-rooms; here and there

two or three idlers shake for drinks. Policemen stroll listlessly about, and have little to do. But at nightfall there is a change; the scrape of fiddles, the stamp of boot-heels, is heard from the dance-halls. Oaths and boisterous laughter everywhere strike the ear. Children, half-clad, run loose at eleven o'clock. Two policemen at a corner interrogate a young man who is hot and excited and has no hat. He admits that he saw three men run from the alley-way and saw the sailor come staggering out after them, but he does not know who the men were. The policemen "take him in," on suspicion.

It is here that the Day-Star Mission has planted itself. Its white flag floats close by the spot where Martin Lavezzo fell, with the long knife between his shoulder-blades. Its sign of welcome is in close rivalry with the harsh strains from Sarah Ward's and the lighted stairway to Bose King's saloon. It stands here, isolated and strange, an unbidden guest. It is a protest, a reproof, a challenge, an uplifted finger.

But while, to a casual glance, the Day-Star

Mission is all out of place, it has, nevertheless, its following. On Monday and Thursday afternoons a troop of black-eyed, jet-haired Portuguese women, half of whom are named Mary Jesus, flock in to a sewing-school. On Tuesdays and Fridays American, Scotch, and Irish women, from the tenement-houses of the quarter, fill the settees, to learn the use of the needle, to enjoy a little peace, and to hear reading and singing; and occasionally the general public of the vicinity are invited to an entertainment.

It was a February afternoon; at the Mission building the board were in monthly session. The meeting had been a spirited one. A proposition to amend the third line of the fourth by-law, entitled "Decorum in the Hall," by inserting the word "smoking," had been debated and had prevailed. A proposition to buy a new mangle for the laundry had been defeated, it having been humorously suggested that the women could mangle each other. Other matters of interest had been considered.

Finally, as the hour for adjournment drew near, a proposition was brought forth, appropriate to

the season. Saint Patrick's Day was approaching. It was to many a day of temptation, particularly in the evening. Would it not be a good plan to hold out the helping hand, in the form of a Saint Patrick's Day festival, with an address, for example, upon Saint Patrick's life, with Irish songs and Irish readings? Such an entertainment would draw ; it would keep a good many people out of the saloons. Such was the suggestions.

The proposition excited no little interest. Ladies who had begun to put on their wraps sat down again. To one of the board, a clergyman, who had lately been lecturing on "Popery the People's Peril," the proposition was startling. It looked toward the breaking down of all barriers; it gave Romanism an outright recognition. Another member, a produce-man, understood,—in fact he had read in his denominational weekly,—that Saint Patrick could be demonstrated to have been a Protestant, and he suggested that that fact might be "brought out." Others viewed the matter in that humorous light in which this festival day commonly strikes the American mind.

The motion prevailed. Even the anti-papistic clergyman was comforted, apparently, at last, for he was heard to whisper jocosely to his left-hand neighbor: "Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning!"

A committee, with the produce-man at the head, was appointed to select a speaker, and to provide music and reading. It was suggested that perhaps Mr. Wakeby and Mrs. Wilson-Smith would volunteer, if urged,—their previous charities in this direction had made them famous in the neighborhood. Mr. Wakeby to read from "Handy Andy;" Mrs. Wilson-Smith to sing "Kathleen Mavourneen,"—there would not be standing-room!

So finally unanimity prevailed, and with unanimity, enthusiasm.

The committee met, and the details were settled. The chairman quietly reserved to himself, by implication, the choice of a speaker. He knew that it would be an audience hard to hold. The occasion demanded a man of peculiar gifts. Such a man, he said to himself, he knew.

II.

THE single meeting-house of L—— stands on the main street, with its tall spire and its two tiers of gray-blinded windows. Beside it is the mossy burial-ground, where prim old ladies walk on Sunday afternoons, with sprigs of sweet-william.

Across the street, and a little way down the road, is the square white house with a hopper-roof, which an elderly, childless widow, departing this life some forty years ago, thoughtfully left behind her for a parsonage. It is a pleasant, home-like house, open to sun and air, and the pleasantest of all its rooms is the minister's study. It is an upper front chamber, with windows to the east and the south. There is nothing in the room of any value; but whether the minister is within, or is away and is represented only by his palm-leaf dressing-gown, somehow the spirit of peace seems always to abide there.

There is the ancient desk, which the minister's children, when they were little, used to call the "omnibus," by reason of a certain vast

and capacious drawer, the resort of all homeless things,—nails, wafers, the bed-key, curtain-fixtures, carpet-tacks, and dried rhubarb. Perhaps it was to this drawer that the minister's daughter lately referred, when she said that the true motto was, "One place for everything, and everything in that one place."

Over the chimney-piece hangs a great missionary map, showing the stations of the different societies, with a key at one side. This blue square in Persia denotes a missionary post of the American Board of Commissioners; that red cross in India is an outpost of a Presbyterian missionary society; this green diamond in Arrapatum marks a station of the Free Church Missionary Union. As one looks the map over, he seems to behold the whole missionary force at work. He sees, in imagination, Mr. Elmer Small, from Augusta, Maine, preaching predestination to a company of Karens, in a house of reeds, and the Rev. Geo. T. Wood, from Massachusetts, teaching Paley in Roberts College at Constantinople.

Thus the whole Christian world lies open before you.

Pinned up on one of the doors is the Pauline Chart. Have you never seen the Pauline Chart? It was prepared in colored inks, by Mr. Parker, a theological student with a turn for penmanship, and lithographed, and was sold by him to eke out the avails of what are inaptly termed "supplies." You would find it exceedingly convenient. It shows in a tabulated form, for ready reference, the incidents of Saint Paul's career, arranged chronologically. Thus you can find at a glance the visit to Berea, the stoning at Lystra, or the tumult at Ephesus. Its usefulness is obvious. Over the desk is a map of the Holy Land, with mountain elevations.

The walls of the room are for the most part hidden by books. The shelves are simple affairs of stained maple, covered heavily with successive coats of varnish, cracked, as is that of the desk, by age and heat. The contents are varied. Of religious works there are the Septuagint, in two fat little blue volumes, like Roman candles; Conant's Genesis; Hodge on Romans; Hackett on Acts, which the minister's small children used to spell out as "Jacket on Acts;" Knott on the Fallacies of the Antinomians;

A Tour in Syria; Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians, and six Hebrew Lexicons, singed by fire,—a paternal inheritance.

There are a good many works, too, of general literature, but rather oddly selected, as will happen where one makes up his library chiefly by writing book-notices: Peter Bayne's Essays; Coleridge; the first volume of Masson's Life of Milton; Vanity Fair; the Dutch Republic; the Plurality of Worlds; and Mommsen's Rome. That very attractive book in red you need not take down; it is only the history of Norwalk, Conn., with the residence of J. T. Wales, Esq., for a frontispiece; the cover is all there is to it. Finally, there are two shelves of Patent Office Reports, and Perry's Expedition to Japan with a panoramic view of Yeddo. This shows that the minister has numbered a congressman among his flock.

It is here that Dr. Parsons is diligently engaged, this cold March afternoon, to the music of his crackling air-tight stove. He is deeply absorbed in his task, and we may peep in and not disturb him. He has a large number of books spread out before him; but looking them over,

we miss Lange's Commentaries, Bengel's *Gnomon*, Cobb on Galatians,— those safe and sound authorities always provided with the correct view.

The books which lie before the Doctor seem all to deal with a Romish Saint, and, of all the saints in the world, Saint Patrick. In full sight of his own steeple, from which the bell is even now counting out the sixty-nine years of a good brother just passed away in hope of a Protestant heaven,— tolling out the years for the village housewives, who pause and count; under such hallowing influences,— beneath, as it were, the very shadow of the Missionary Map and the Pauline Chart, and with a gray Jordan rushing down through a scarlet Palestine directly before him, suggestive of all good things; with Knott on the Fallacies at his right hand, and with Dowling on Romanism on his left, the Doctor is actually absorbed in Papistical literature. Here are the works of Dr. Lanigan and Father Colgan and Monseigneur Moran. Here is the "Life and Legends of Saint Patrick," illustrated, with a portrait in gilt of Brian Boru on the cover. Here are the Tripartite Life, in Latin,

and the saint's Confession, and the Epistle to Coroticus, the Ossianic Poems, and Miss Cusack's magnificent quarto, which the Doctor has borrowed from the friendly priest at the factory village four miles away, who borrowed it from the library of the Bishop to lend to him.

Perhaps you have never undertaken to prepare a life of Saint Patrick. If so, you have no idea of the difficulties of the task. In the first place, you must settle the question whether Saint Patrick ever existed. And this is a disputed point; for while there are those, like Father Colgan, whose clear faith accepts Saint Patrick just as he stands in history and tradition, yet, on the other hand, there are sceptics, like Ledwick, who contend that the saint is nothing but a prehistoric myth, floating about in the imagination of the Irish people.

Having settled to your satisfaction that Patrick really lived, you must next proceed to fix the date of his birth; and here you enter upon complicated calculations. You will probably decide to settle first, as a starting-point, the date of the saint's escape from captivity; and to do

this you will have to reconcile the fact that after the captivity he paid a friendly visit to his kinsman, Saint Martin of Tours, who died in 397, with the fact that he was not captured until 400.

Next you will come to the matter of the saint's birthplace; and this is a delicate question, for you will have to decide between the claims of Ireland, of Scotland, and of France; and you will very probably find yourself finally driven to the conclusion — for the evidence points that way — that Saint Patrick was a Frenchman.

Next comes the question of the saint's length of days; and if you attempt to include only the incidents of his life of which there can be no possible doubt, you will stretch his age on until you will probably fix it at one hundred and twenty years.

But when you have settled the existence, the date of birth, and the nationality of Saint Patrick, you are still only upon the threshold of your inquiries; for you next find before you for examination a vast variety of miracles, accredited to him, which you must examine, weeding out

such as are puerile and are manifestly not well established, and retaining such as are proved to your satisfaction. You will be struck at once with the novel and interesting character of some of them. Prince Caradoc was changed into a wolf. An Irish magician who opposed the saint was swallowed by the earth as far as his ears, and then, on repentance, was instantly cast forth and set free. An Irish pagan, dead and long buried, talked freely with the saint from out his turf-covered grave, and charitably explained where a certain cross belonged which had been set by mistake over him. The saint was captured once, and was exchanged for a kettle, which thenceforth froze water over the fire instead of boiling it, until the saint was sent back and the kettle returned. Ruain, son of Cucnamha, Amhalgaidh's charioteer, was blind. He went in haste to meet Saint Patrick, to be healed. Mignag laughed at him. "My troth," said Patrick, "it would be fit that you were the blind one." The blind man was healed and the seeing one was made blind; Roi-Ruain is the name of the place where this was done. Patrick's charioteer was looking for his horses in the

dark, and could not find them; Patrick lifted up his hand; his five fingers illuminated the place like five torches, and the horses were found.

You see that one has a good deal to go through who undertakes to prepare a life of Saint Patrick.

But our thoughts have wandered from Dr. Parsons. He has gathered the books before him with great pains, from public and private libraries, and he religiously meant to make an exhaustive study of them all; but sermons and parish calls and funerals, and that little affair of Mrs. Samuel Nute, have forced him, by a process of which we all know something, to forego his projected subsoil ploughing and make such hasty preparation as he can.

He has read the Confession and the Epistle to Coroticus, and he has glanced over the "Life and Legends," reading in a cursory way of the leper's miraculous voyage; of the fantastic snow; of the tombstone that sailed the seas; of the two trout that Patrick left to live forever in a well,—

“The two inseparable trout,
Which would advance against perpetual streams,
Without obligation, without transgression —
Angels will be along with them in it.”

And being very fond of pure water himself, the Doctor is touched by Patrick’s lament when far away from the well Uaran-gar: —

“Uaran-gar, Uaran-gar !
O well, which I have loved, which lovèd me !
Alas ! my cry, O my dear God,
That my drink is not from the pure well of Uaran-gar !”

But finally he has settled down, as most casual students will, to the sincere and charming little sketch by William Bullen Morris, — “Saint Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland.” He is reading it now by the east window, holding the book at arm’s-length, as is his wont.

The theme is new to him. There opens up a fresh and interesting field. The dedication of the little book strikes his imagination: “To the Members of the Confraternity of Saint Patrick, established at the London Oratory, who, with the children of the saint in many lands, are the enduring witnesses of the faith which seeth Him who is invisible.”

He is interested in the motto on the title-page,—“*En un mot, on y voit beaucoup le caractère de S. Paul,*” and in the authorization,—“*Nihil obstat. E. S. Keagh, Cong. Orat.*” “*Imprimatur, ♪ Henricus Eduardus, Card.*”

The Doctor looks through the book in order. First, the introduction; and here he considers the questions — First, was there in fact such a man as Saint Patrick? Second, what was his nationality? Third, when was he born: and, herein, does the date of his escape from captivity conflict with the date of his visit to his kinsman, Saint Martin of Tours? Fourth, to what age did he live? Fifth, where and by whom was he converted? Sixth, are his miracles authentic? and so forth.

After this introductory study the book takes up the saint's life in connected order. Patrick was the son of a Roman decurio. From his earliest days wonders attended him. When he was an infant, and was about to be baptized, it happened that no water was to be had for the sacrament; whereupon, at the sign of the cross, made by the priest with the infant's hand upon the earth, a fountain gushed forth from the

ground, and the priest, who was blind, anointing his own eyes with the water, received his sight.

As Patrick grew older, wonders multiplied. He came as an apostle of the faith to Strangford Lough. Dicu, the prince of that province, forewarned by the Druids, raised his sword at Patrick; but instantly his hand was fixed in the air, as if carved of stone; then light came to Dicu's soul, and from a foe he became a loving disciple.

Then comes the story of the fast upon the mountain. It was on the height ever since called Cruachan Patrick, which looks to the north upon Clew Bay, and to the west on the waters of the Atlantic. It was Shrove Saturday, a year and a little more from the apostle's first landing in Ireland. Already he had carried the gospel from the eastern to the western sea. But his spirit longed for the souls of the whole Irish nation. Upon the mountain he knelt in prayer, and as he prayed, his faith and his demands assumed gigantic proportions. An angel came down and addressed him. God could not grant his requests, the message ran, they

were too great. "Is that his decision?" asked Patrick. "It is," said the angel. "It may be his," said Patrick, "it is not mine; for my decision is not to leave this cruachan until my demands are granted."

The angel departed. For forty days and forty nights Patrick fasted and prayed amid sore temptations. The blessing must fall upon all his poor people of Erin. As he prayed, he wept, and his cowl was drenched with his tears.

At last the angel returned and proposed a compromise. The vast Atlantic lay before them. Patrick might have as many souls as would cover its expanse as far as his eyes could reach. But he was not satisfied with that; his eyes, he said, could not reach very far over those heaving waters; he must have, in addition, a multitude vast enough to cover the land that lay between him and the sea. The angel yielded, and now bade him leave the mountain. But Patrick would not. "I have been tormented," he said, "and I must be gratified; and unless my prayers are granted I will not leave this cruachan while I live; and after my death there shall be here a care-taker for me."

The angel departed. Patrick went to his offering.

At evening the angel returned. "How am I answered?" asked Patrick. "Thus," said the angel: "all creatures, visible and invisible, including the Twelve Apostles, have entreated for thee,—and they have obtained. Strike thy bell and fall upon thy knees: for the blessing shall be on all Erin, both living and dead." "A blessing on the bountiful King that hath given," said Patrick; "now will I leave the cruachan."

It was on Holy Thursday that he came down from the mountain and returned to his people.

III.

ONE afternoon at about this time you might have seen Mr. Cole, the missionary of the Day-Star,—a small, lithe man, with a red beard,—making his way up town. He walked rapidly, as he always did, for he was a busy man.

He was an exceedingly busy man. During the past year, as was shown by his printed report, he had made 2,014 calls, or five and one-

half calls a day; he had read the Scriptures in families 792 times; he had distributed 931,456 pages of religious literature; he had conversed on religious topics with 3,918 persons, or ten and seven-tenths persons per day, Sabbaths included. It was perhaps because he was so busy that there was complaint sometimes that he mixed matters and took things upon his shoulders which belonged to others.

Mr. Cole's rapid pace soon brought him to a broad and pleasant cross-street; he went up the high steps of one of the houses, rang the bell, and was admitted.

Rev. Mr. Martin was in his study, and the missionary was shown up. Precisely what the conversation was has not been reported; but certain it is that the next day after Mr. Cole's call, Mr. Martin began to prepare himself for an address upon the life of Saint Patrick. It was an entirely new topic to him; but he soon found himself in the full current of the stream, considering—First, did such a man really exist, or is Saint Patrick a mere myth, floating in the imagination of the Irish people? Second, what was his nationality? Third, where was he born,

and, herein, how are we to reconcile his escape from captivity in 493, with his visit to his kinsman, Saint Martin of Tours, after his escape from captivity, in 490? Fourth, to what age did he live? Fifth,— and so forth.

Mr. Martin had begun his labors by taking down his encyclopædia and such books of reference as he had thought could help him, and had succeeded so far as to get an outline of the saint's life, and to find mention of several works which treated of this topic. There were Montalembert's "Monks of the West," and Dr. O'Donovan's "Annals of the Four Masters," the works of Monseigneur Moran and Father Colgan, the Tripartite Life, and a certain "magnificent quarto" by Miss Cusack. All these and many more he had hoped to find in the different libraries of the city. But great had been his surprise, on visiting the libraries, to find that the books he wanted were invariably out. It was a little startling, at first, to come upon this footprint in the sand; but a little reflection set the feeling at rest. The subject was an odd one to him, to be sure, but there were thousands of people in the city who might very naturally be

concerned in it, particularly at this time, when Saint Patrick's Day was approaching. None the less the fact remained that the books he wanted — scattered through two or three libraries — were always out.

As he stepped out from the Free Library into the street, it occurred to him to go to a Catholic bookstore near at hand to look for what he wanted.

It was a large, showy shop, with Virgins and crucifixes and altar candelabras in the windows, and pictures of bleeding hearts. He went in and stood at the counter. A rosy-faced servant-girl, with a shy, pleased expression, was making choice of a rosary. A young priest, a few steps away, was looking at an image of Saint Joseph.

The salesman left the servant-girl to her hesitating choice, and turned to Mr. Martin.

“What have you,” asked Mr. Martin, with a slightly conscious tone, “upon the life of Saint Patrick?”

The priest turned and looked; but the salesman, with an unmoved countenance, went to the shelves and selected two volumes and laid them

in silence on the counter. One was the "Life and Legends of Saint Patrick" with a picture in gilt of Brian Boru on the cover. The other was "Saint Patrick, the Apostle of Ireland," by William Bullen Morris, Priest of the Oratory. They were both green-covered.

Early in the evening Mr. Martin settled down by his study fire to his new purchases. First he took up the "Life and Legends." He read the saint's own Confession, and the Letter to Co-roticus, and looked through the translation of the Tripartite Life, with its queer mixture of Latin and English: "Prima feria venit Patricius ad Talleriam, where the regal assembly was, to Cairpre, the son of Niall." "Interrogat autem Patricius qua causa venit Conall, and Conall related the reason to Patrick."

He glanced over the miracles and wonders of which this book was full. But before very long he laid it aside and took up the Life by William Bullen Morris, Priest of the Oratory, and decided that he must depend upon that for his preparation.

It was late at night. It was full time to stop

reading; but it laid strong hold of his imagination,—this strange, intense, and humorous figure, looming up all new to him from the mists of the past. He read the book to the end; he read how the good Saint Bridget foretold the apostle's death; how two provinces contended for his remains, and how a light shone over his burial-place after he was laid to rest.

It was very late when Mr. Martin finished the book and laid it down.

Thus it happens that the Rev. Dr. Parsons and the Rev. Mr. Martin are both preparing themselves at the same time on the life of Saint Patrick, from this one brief book by William Bullen Morris, Priest of the Oratory.

IV.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY has come and is now fast waning. The sun has sunk behind the chimney-stack of the New Albion dance-hall; the street lamps are lighted and are faintly contending against the dull glow of the late afternoon.

There is a lull between day and evening. All

day there has been a stir in the city. There has been a procession in green sashes, with harps on the banners,— a long procession, in broughouses, on horseback, and afoot. There have been impassioned addresses before the Hibernian Society and the Saint Peter's Young Men's Irish Catholic Benevolent Association. There has been more or less celebration in Ship Street.

The evening advances. It is seven o'clock. Strains of invitation issue from all the dance-halls. Already the people have begun to file in to the Day-Star Mission. The audience-room is on the street floor. The missionary stands at the open door, with anxious smiles, urging decorum. A knot of idlers on each side of the doorway, on the sidewalk, comment freely on him and on those who enter. Every moment or two a policeman forces them back.

At a quarter of seven a preliminary praise-meeting begins. Singing from within jars against the fiddling from over the way. You hear at once "Come to Jesus just now!" and "Old Dan Tucker."

Already the seats are filled,— eight in a settee;

those who come now will have to stand. Still, people continue to file in: laborers, Portuguese sewing-women, two or three firemen in long-tailed coats and silver buttons, from Hook and Ladder Six, in the next block; gross-looking women, *habitues* of the Mission, with children; women who are *habitues* of no mission; prosperous saloon-keepers; one of the councilmen of the ward,—he is a saloon-keeper too.

Dr. Parsons's train brought him to town in good season. He passed in with other invited guests at the private door, and he has been upon the platform for ten minutes. His daughter is beside him; ten or a dozen of his parishioners, who have come too, occupy seats directly in front.

The platform seats are nearly all taken; it is time to begin. The street-door opens and a passage is made for a new-comer. It is Mr. Martin. A contingent from his church come with him and fill the few chairs that are still reserved about the desk.

Now all would appear to be ready; but there is still a few moments' pause. The missionary is probably completing some preliminary

arrangements. The audience sit in stolid expectation.

Dr. Parsons, from beneath his eyebrows, is studying the faces before him. In this short time his address has entirely changed form in his mind. It was simple as he had planned it; it must be simpler yet. But he has felt the pulse of the people before him. He feels that he can hold them, that he can stir them.

Meanwhile a whispered colloquy is going on, at the rear of the platform, between the missionary and the chairman of the committee for the evening. The missionary appears to be explanatory and apologetic, the chairman flushed. In a moment a hand is placed on Dr. Parsons's shoulder. He starts, half rises, and turns abruptly.

There has been, it seems, an unfortunate misunderstanding. Through some mistake Mr. Martin has been asked to make the address upon the life of Saint Patrick, and has prepared himself with care. He is one of the Mission's most influential friends; his church is among its chief benefactors. It is an exceedingly painful affair; but will Dr. Parsons give way to Mr. Martin?

So it is all over. The Doctor takes his seat and looks out again upon those hard, dreary faces,—his no longer. He has not realized until now how he has been looking forward to this evening. But the vision has fled. No ripples of uncouth laughter, no ready tears. No reaching these dull, violated hearts through the Saint whom they adore: that privilege is another's.

But the chairman again draws near. Will Dr. Parsons make the opening prayer?

The Doctor bows assent. He folds his arms and closes his eyes. You can see that he is trying to concentrate his thoughts in preparation for prayer. It is doubtless hard to divert them from the swift channel in which they have been bounding along.

Now all is ready. The missionary touches a bell, the signal for silence.

The Doctor rises. For a moment he stands looking over the rows on rows of hardened faces,—looking on those whom he has so longed to reach. He raises his hand; there is a dead silence, and he begins.

It was inevitable, at the outset, that he should

refer to the occasion which had brought us together. It was natural to recall that we were come to celebrate the birth of an uncommon man. It was natural to suggest that he was no creature of story or ancient legend, floating about in the imagination of an ignorant people, but a real man like us, of flesh and blood. It was natural to add that he was a man born centuries ago; that the scene of his labors was the green island across the sea, where many of us now present had first seen the light. It was natural to give thanks for that godly life which had led three nations to claim the good man's birth-place. It was natural to suggest that if about the sweet memories of this man's life fancy had fondly woven countless legends, we might, with a discerning eye, read in them all the saintly power of the man of God. What though his infant hand may not have caused earthly waters to gush from the ground and heal the blindness of the ministering priest, nevertheless doth childhood ever call forth a well-spring of life, giving fresh sight to the blind,— to teacher and taught.

But why go on? Who has not heard, again

and again, the old-fashioned prayer wherein all is laid forth, in outline, but with distinctness! We give thanks for this. May this be impressed upon our hearts. May this lead us solemnly to reflect.

The heart that is full must overflow,— if not in one way, then in another.

Mr. Martin has not been told about Dr. Parsons. He sits and listens as the Doctor goes on in the innocence of his heart, pouring forth with warmth and fervor the life of the saint according to William Bullen Morris, Priest of the Oratory,— pouring forth in unmistakable detail Mr. Martin's projected discourse.

The prayer is ended; a hymn is sung, and then the missionary presents to the audience the Rev. Mr. Martin, whom they are always delighted to hear; he will now address them upon the life of Saint Patrick.

Mr. Martin rises. He takes a sip of water. He coughs slightly. He passes his handkerchief across his lips. So far all is well. But the prayer is in his mind. Moreover, he unfortunately catches his wife's eye, with a suggestion of suppressed merriment in it.

What does he say? What can he say? There are certain vague lessons from the saint's virtues; some applications of what the Doctor has set forth; that is all. Saint Patrick was sober; we should be sober. Saint Patrick was kind; we should be kind.

Even his own parishioners admitted that he had not been "happy" on this particular occasion.

But at the close of the meeting Dr. Parsons received a compliment. As he descended from the platform, Mr. John Keenan, who kept the best-appointed bar-room on the street, advanced to meet him. Mr. Keenan was in an exceedingly happy frame of mind. He grasped the Doctor's hand. "I wish, sir," he said, with a fine brogue, "to congratulate you upon your very eloquent prayer. It remind me, sir,—and I take pleasure to say it,—it remind me, sir, of the Honorable John Kelly's noble oration on Daniel O'Connell."

Late that evening the Doctor stood at his study-window, looking out for a moment before

retiring to rest. There was no light in the room, and the maps and the charts and the tall book-shelves were only outlines. There was a glimmer from a farm-house two miles away, where they were watching with the dead.

The Doctor's daughter came in with a light in her hand to bid her father good-night.

"What did you think, Pauline," he said to her, "of Mr. Martin's talk?" It had not been mentioned till now.

Pauline hardly knew what to think. She knew that it was not what the Rev. Dr. Parsons would have given them! But, honestly, what did her father think of it?

The Doctor mused for a moment; then he gave his judgment. "I think," he said, "that it showed a certain lack of preparation."



E L I.

I.

UNDER a boat, high and dry at low tide, on the beach, John Wood was seated in the sand, sheltered from the sun in the boat's shadow, absorbed in the laying on of verdigris. The dull, worn color was rapidly giving place to a brilliant, shining green. Occasionally a scraper, which lay by, was taken up to remove the last trace of a barnacle.

It was Wood's boat, but he was not a boatman; he painted cleverly, but he was not a painter. He kept the brown store under the elms of the main street, now hot and still, where at this moment his blushing sister was captivating the heart of an awkward farmer's boy as she sold him a pair of striped suspenders.

As the church clock struck the last of twelve decided blows, three children came rushing out

of the house on the bank above the beach. It was one of those deceptive New England cottages, weather-worn without, but bright and bountifully home-like within,—with its trim parlor, proud of a cabinet organ; with its front hall, now cooled by the light sea-breeze drifting through the blind-door, where a tall clock issued its monotonous call to a siesta on the rattan lounge; with its spare room, open now, opposite the parlor, and now, too, drawing in the salt air through close-shut blinds, in anticipation of the joyful arrival this evening of Sister Sarah, with her little brood, from the city.

The children scampered across the road, and then the eldest hushed the others and sent a little brother ahead to steal, barefoot, along the shining sea-weed to his father.

The plotted surprise appeared to succeed completely. The painter was seized by the ears from behind, and captured.

“Guess who’s here, or you can’t get up,” said the infant captor.

“It’s Napoleon Bonaparte; don’t joggle,” said his father, running a brush steadily along the water-line.

“No! no! no!” with shouts of laughter from the whole attacking party.

“Then it’s Captain Ezekiel.”

This excited great merriment: Captain Ezekiel was an aged, purblind man, who leaned on a cane.

After attempts to identify the invader — with the tax-collector come for taxes, then with the elderly minister making a pastoral call, with the formal schoolmaster, and with Samuel J. Tilden — the victim reached over his shoulder, and, seizing the assailant by a handful of calico jacket, brought him around, squirming, before him.

“Now,” he said, “I’ll give you a coat of verdigris. (Great applause from the reserve force behind.)

“I suppose Mother sent you to say dinner’s ready,” said the father, rising and surveying the green bottom of the boat. “I must eat quick, so as to do the other side before half-flood.”

And with a child on each shoulder, and the third pushing him from behind with her head, he marched toward the vine-covered kitchen,

where, between two opposite netted doors, the table was trimly set.

“Father, you look like a mermaid, with your green hands,” said his wife, laughing, as she handed him the spirits of turpentine. “A woman could paint that boat, in a light dress, and not get a spot on her.”

He smiled good-naturedly: he never spoke much.

“I guess Louise won’t have much trade to-day,” said his wife, as they all sat down; “it’s so hot in the sun that everybody’ll wait till night. But she has her tatting-work to do, and she’s got a book, too, that she wanted to finish.”

Her husband nodded, and ate away.

“Oh, can’t we go up street and see her, this afternoon?” said one of the children.

“Who can that be?” said the mother, as an elderly, half-official-looking man stopped his horse at the front gate and alighted. The man left the horse unchecked to browse by the roadside, and came to the door.

“Oh, it’s you, Captain Nourse,” said Wood, rising to open the netting door, and holding out his hand. “Come to summons me as a witness

in something about the bank case, I suppose. Let me introduce Captain Nourse, Mary," he said, "deputy sheriff. Sit down, Captain, and have some dinner with us."

"No, I guess I won't set," said the captain. "I cal'lated not to eat till I got home, in the middle o' the afternoon. No, I'll set down in eye-shot of the mare, and read the paper while you eat."

"I hope they don't want me to testify anywhere to-day," said Wood; "because my boat's half verdigris'd, and I want to finish her this afternoon."

"No testimony to-day," said the captain. "Hi! hi! Kitty!" he called to the mare, as she began to meander across the road; and he went out to a tree by the front fence, and sat down on a green bench, beside a work-basket and a half-finished child's dress, and read the country paper which he had taken from the office as he came along.

After dinner Wood went out bareheaded, and leaned on the fence by the captain. His wife stood just inside the door, looking out at them.

The "bank case" was the great sensation of

the town, and Wood was one of the main witnesses, for he had been taking the place of the absent cashier when the safe was broken open and rifled to the widespread distress of depositors and stockholders, and the ruin of Hon. Edward Clark, the president. Wood had locked the safe on the afternoon before the eventful night, and had carried home the key with him, and he was to testify to the contents of the safe as he had left it.

"I guess they're glad they've got such a witness as John," said his wife to herself, as she looked at him fondly, "and I guess they think there won't be much doubt about what he says."

"Well, Captain," said Wood, jocosely, breaking a spear of grass to bits in his fingers, "I didn't know but you'd come to arrest me."

The captain calmly smiled as only a man can smile who has been accosted with the same humorous remark a dozen times a day for twenty years. He folded his paper carefully, put it in his pocket, took off his spectacles and put them in their silver case, took a red silk handkerchief from his hat, wiped his face,

and put the handkerchief back. Then he said shortly,—

“That’s what I *have* come for.”

Wood, still leaning on the fence, looked at him, and said nothing.

“That’s just what I ‘ve come for,” said Captain Nourse. “I ‘ve got to arrest you; here’s the warrant.” And he handed it to him.

“What does this mean?” said Wood. “I can’t make head or tail of this.”

“Well,” said the captain, “the long and short is, these high-toned detectives that they ‘ve hed down from town, seein’ as our own force was n’t good enough, allow that the safe was unlocked with a key, in due form, and then the lock was broke afterward, to look as if it had been forced open. They ‘ve hed the foreman of the safe-men down, too, and he says the same thing. Naturally, the argument is, there was only two keys in existence,—one was safe with the president of the bank, and is about all he ‘s got to show out of forty years’ savings; the only other one you hed: consequently, it heaves it onto you.”

“I see,” said Wood. “I will go with you.

Do you want to come into the house with me while I get my coat?"

"Well, I suppose I must keep you in sight,— now you know."

And they went into the house.

"Mary," said her husband, "the folks that lost by Clark when the bank broke have been at him until he's felt obliged to pitch on somebody, and he's pitched on me; and Captain Nourse has come to arrest me. I shall get bail before long."

She said nothing, and did not shed a tear till he was gone.

But then —

II.

WIDE wastes of salt-marsh to the right, imprisoning the upland with a vain promise of infinite liberty, and, between low, distant sand-hills, a rim of sea. Stretches of pine woods behind, shutting in from the great outer world, and soon to darken into evening gloom. Ploughed fields and elm-dotted pastures to the left, and birch-lined roads leading by white farm-houses

to the village, all speaking of cheer and freedom to the prosperous and the happy, but to the unfortunate and the indebted, of meshes invisible but strong as steel. But, before, no lonesome marshes, no desolate forest, no farm or village street, but the free blue ocean, rolling and tumbling still from the force of an expended gale.

In the open doorway of a little cottage, warmed by the soft slanting rays of the September sun, a rough man, burnt and freckled, was sitting, at his feet a net, engaged upon some handiwork which two little girls were watching. Close by him lay a setter, his nose between his paws. Occasionally the man raised his eyes to scan the sea.

“There’s Joel,” he said, “comin’ in around the Bar. Not much air stirrin’ now!”

Then he turned to his work again.

“First, you go *so* fash’,” he said to the children, as he drew a thread; “then you go *so* fash’.”

And as he worked he made a great show of labor, much to their diversion.

But the sight of Joel’s broad white sail had

not brought pleasant thoughts to his mind; for Joel had hailed him, off the Shoal, the afternoon before, and had obligingly offered to buy his fish right there, and so let him go directly home, omitting to mention that sudden jump of price due to an empty market.

“Wonder what poor man he’s took a dollar out of to-day! Well, I s’pose it’s all right: those that’s got money, want money.”

“What be you, Eli — ganging on hooks?” said Aunt Patience, as she tiptoed into the kitchen behind him, from his wife’s sick-room, and softly closed the door after her.

“No,” said the elder of the children; “he’s mending our stockings, and showing me how.”

“Well, you do have a hard time, don’t you?” said Aunt Patience, looking down over his shoulder; “to slave and tug and scrape to get a house over your head, and then to have to turn square ’round, and stay to home with a sick woman, and eat all into it with mortgages! ”

“Oh, well,” he said, “we ’ll fetch, somehow.”

Aunt Patience went to the glass, and holding a black pin in her mouth, carefully tied the strings of her sun-bonnet.

"Anyway," she says, "you take it good-natured. Though if there is one thing that's harder than another, it is to be good-natured all the time, without being aggravating. I have known men that was so awfully good-natured that they was harder to live with than if they was cross!"

And without specifying further, she opened her plaid parasol and stepped out at the porch.

Though, on this quiet afternoon of Saturday, the peace of the approaching Sabbath seemed already brooding over the little dwelling, peace had not lent her hand to the building of the home. Every foot of land, every shingle, every nail, had been wrung from the reluctant sea. Every voyage had contributed something. It was a great day when Eli was able to buy the land. Then, between two voyages, he dug a cellar and laid a foundation; then he saved enough to build the main part of the cottage and to finish the front room, lending his own hand to the work. Then he used to get letters at every port, telling of progress,— how Lizzie,

his wife, had adorned the front room with a bright ninepenny paper, of which a little piece was enclosed, — which he kept as a sort of charm about him and exhibited to his friends; how she and her little brother had lathed the entry and the kitchen, and how they had set out blackberry vines from the woods. Then another letter told of a surprise awaiting him on his return; and, in due time, coming home as third mate from Hong-Kong to a seaman's tumultuous welcome, he had found that a great, good-natured mason, with whose sick child his wife had watched night after night, had appeared one day with lime and hair and sand, and in white raiment, and had plastered the entry and the kitchen, and finished a room upstairs.

And so, for years, at home and on the sea, at New York and at Valparaiso and in the Straits of Malacca, the little house and the little family within it had grown into the fibre of Eli's heart. Nothing had given him more delight than to meet, in the strange streets of Calcutta or before the Mosque of Omar, some practical Yankee from Stonington or Machias, and, whittling,

to discuss with him, among the turbans of the Orient, the comparative value of shaved and of sawed shingles, or the economy of "Swedes-iron" nails, and to go over with him the estimates and plans which he had worked out in his head under all the constellations of the skies.

The supper things were cleared away. The children had said good-night and gone to bed, and Eli had been sitting for an hour by his wife's bedside. He had had to tax his patience and ingenuity heavily during the long months that she had lain there to entertain her for a little while in the evening, after his hard, wet day's work. He had been talking now of the coming week, when he was to serve upon the jury in the adjoining county-town.

"I cal'late I can come home about every night," he said, "and it'll be quite a change, at any rate."

"But you don't seem so cheerful about it as I counted you would be," said his wife. "Are you afraid you'll have to be on the bank case?"

"Not much!" he answered. "No trouble 'n that case! Jury won't leave their seats. These city fellers 'll find they've bit off more 'n they can chew when they try to figure out John Wood done that. I only hope I'll have the luck to be on that case—all hands on the jury whisper together a minute, and then clear him, right on the spot, and then shake hands with him all 'round!"

"But something is worrying you," she said. "What is it? You have looked it since noon."

"Oh, nothin'," he replied—"only George Cahoon came up to-noon to say that he was goin' West next week, and that he would have to have that money he let me have awhile ago. And where to get it—I don't know."

III.

THE court-room was packed. John Wood's trial was drawing to its close. Eli was on the jury. Some one had advised the prosecuting attorney, in a whisper, to challenge him, but he had shaken his head and said,—

"Oh, I could n't afford to challenge him for

that; it would only leak out, and set the jury against me. I'll risk his standing out against this evidence."

The trial had been short. It had been shown how the little building of the bank had been entered. Skilled locksmiths from the city had testified that the safe was opened with a key, and that the lock was broken afterward, from the inside, plainly to raise the theory of a forcible entry by strangers.

It had been proved that the only key in existence, not counting that kept by the president, was in the possession of Wood, who was filling, for a few days, the place of the cashier—the president's brother—in his absence. It had been shown that Wood was met, at one o'clock of the night in question, crossing the fields toward his home, from the direction of the bank, with a large wicker basket slung over his shoulders, returning, as he had said, from eel-spearing in Harlow's Creek; and there was other circumstantial evidence.

Mr. Clark, the president of the bank, had won the sympathy of every one by the modest way in which, with his eye-glasses in his hand, he

had testified to the particulars of the loss which had left him penniless, and had ruined others whose little all was in his hands. And then in reply to the formal question, he had testified, amid roars of laughter from the court-room, that it was not he who robbed the safe. At this, even the judge and Wood's lawyer had not restrained a smile.

This had left the guilt with Wood. His lawyer, an inexperienced young attorney, — who had done more or less business for the bank and would hardly have ventured to defend this case but that the president had kindly expressed his entire willingness that he should do so, — had, of course, not thought it worth while to cross-examine Mr. Clark, and had directed his whole argument against the theory that the safe had been opened with a key, and not by strangers. But he had felt all through that, as a man politely remarked to him when he finished, he was only butting his “head ag'in a stone wall.”

And while he was arguing, a jolly-looking old lawyer had written, in the fly-leaf of a law-book on his knee, and had passed with a wink to a

young man near him who had that very morning been admitted to the bar, these lines:—

“ When callow Blackstones soar too high,
Quit common-sense, and reckless fly,
Soon, Icarus-like, they headlong fall,
And down come client, case, and all.”

The district-attorney had not thought it worth while to expend much strength upon his closing argument; but being a jovial stump-speaker, of a wide reputation within narrow limits, he had not been able to refrain from making merry over Wood’s statement that the basket which he had been seen bearing home, on the eventful night, was a basket of eels.

“ Fine eels those, gentlemen ! We have seen gold-fish and silver-fish, but golden eels are first discovered by this defendant. The apostle, in Holy Writ, caught a fish with a coin in its mouth ; but this man leaves the apostle in the dim distance when he finds eels that are all money. No storied fisherman of Bagdad, catching enchanted princes disguised as fishes in the sea, ever hooked such a treasure as this defendant hooked when he hooked that basket of eels ! [Rustling appreciation of the jest

among the jury.] If a squirming, twisting, winding, wriggling eel, gentlemen, can be said at any given moment to have a back, we may distinguish this new-found species as the green-back eel. It is a common saying that no man can hold an eel and remain a Christian. I should like to have viewed the pious equanimity of this good man when he laid his hands on that whole bed of eels. In happy, barefoot boyhood, gentlemen, we used to find mud-turtles marked with initials or devices cut in their shells; but what must have been our friend's surprise to find, in the muddy bed of Harlow's Creek, eels marked with a steel-engraving of the landing of Columbus and the signature of the Register of the Treasury! I hear that a corporation is now being formed by the title of The Harlow's Creek Greenback National Bank-bill Eel-fishing Company, to follow up, with seines and spears, our worthy friend's discovery! I learn that the news of this rich placer has spread to the golden mountains of the West, and that the exhausted intellects which have been reduced to such names for their mines as 'The Tombstone,' 'The Red Dog,' the 'Mrs.

E. J. Parkhurst,' are likely now to flood us with prospectuses of the 'Eel Mine,' 'The Flat Eel,' 'The Double Eel,' and then, when they get ready to burst upon confiding friends, 'The Consolidated Eels.' "

It takes but little to make a school or a court-room laugh, and the speech had appeared to give a good deal of amusement to the listeners.

To all?

Did it amuse that man who sat, with folded arms, harsh and rigid, at the dock? Did it divert that white-faced woman, cowering in a corner, listening as in a dream?

The judge now charged the jury briefly. It was unnecessary for him, he said, to recapitulate evidence of so simple a character. The chief question for the jury was as to the credibility of the witnesses. If the witnesses for the prosecution were truthful and were not mistaken, the inference of guilt seemed inevitable; this the defendant's counsel had conceded. The defendant had proved a good reputation; upon that point there was only this to be said: that, while such

evidence was entitled to weight, yet, on the other hand, crimes involving a breach of trust could, from their very nature, be committed only by persons whose good reputations secured them positions of trust.

The jury-room had evidently not been furnished by a ring. It had a long table for debate, twelve hard chairs for repose, twelve spittoons for luxury, and a clock.

The jury sat in silence for a few moments, as old Captain Nourse, who had them in his keeping, and eyed them as if he was afraid that he might lose one of them in a crack and be held accountable on his bond, rattled away at the unruly lock. Looking at them then, you would have seen faces all of a New England cast but one. There was a tall, powerful negro called George Washington, a man well known in this county town, to which he had come, as drift-wood from the storm of war, in '65. Some of the "boys" had heard him, in a great prayer-meeting in Washington—a city which he always spoke of as his "namesake"—at the time of the great review, say, in his strong voice,

with that pathetic quaver in it: "Like as de parched an' weary traveller hangs his harp upon de winder, an' sighs for oysters in de desert, so I longs to res' my soul an' my foot in Mass' chusetts;" and they were so delighted with him that they invited him on the spot to go home with them, and took up a collection to pay his fare; and so he was a public character. As for his occupation, — when the census-taker, with a wink to the boys in the store, had asked him what it was, he had said, in that same odd tone: "Putties up glass a little — whitewashes a little —" and, when the man had made a show of writing all that down, "preaches a little." He might have said, "preaches a big," for you could hear him half a mile away.

The foreman was a retired sea-captain. "Good cap'n — Cap'n Thomas," one of his neighbors had said of him. "Allers gits good ships — never hez to go huntin' 'round for a vessel. But it is astonishin' what differences they is! Now there's Cap'n A. K. P. Bassett, down to the West Harbor. You let it git 'round that Cap'n A. K. P. is goin' off on a Chiny voyage, and you'll see half a dozen old shays to once-t,

hitched all along his fence of an arternoon, and wimmen inside the house, to git Cap'n A. K. P. to take their boys. But you let Cap'n Thomas give out that he wants boys, and he hez to glean 'em—from the poor-house, and from step-mothers, and where he can: the women knows! Still," he added, "Cap'n Thomas 's a good cap'n. I've nothin' to say ag'in him. He 's smart!"

"Gentlemen," said the foreman, when the officer, at last, had securely locked them in, "shall we go through the formality of a ballot? If the case were a less serious one, we might have rendered a verdict in our seats."

"What's the use foolin' 'round ballotin'?" said a thick-set butcher. "Ain't we all o' one mind?"

"It is for you to say, gentlemen," said the foreman. "I should n't want to have it go abroad that we had not acted formally, if there was any one disposed to cavil."

"Mr. Speaker," said George Washington, rising and standing in the attitude of Webster, "I rises to appoint to order. We took ballast

in de prior cases, and why make flesh of one man an' a fowl of another?"

"Very well," said the foreman, a trifle sharply; " 'the longest way round is the shortest way home.' "

Twelve slips of paper were handed out, to be indorsed guilty, "for form." They were collected in a hat and the foreman told them over—"just for form." " 'Guilty,' 'guilty,' 'guilty,' 'guilty'—wait a minute," he said, "here is a mistake. Here is one 'not guilty'—whose is this?"

There was a pause.

"Whose is it?" said the foreman, sharply.

Eli turned a little red.

"It's mine," he said.

"Do you mean it?" said the foreman.

"Of course I mean it," he answered.

"Whew!" whistled the foreman. "Very well, sir; we'll have an understanding, then. This case is proved to the satisfaction of every man who heard it, I may safely say, but one. Will that one please state the grounds of his opinion?"

"I ain't no talker," said Eli, "but I ain't satisfied he's guilty—that's all."

“Don’t you believe the witnesses?”

“Mostly.”

“Which one don’t you believe?”

“I can’t say. I don’t believe he’s guilty.”

“Is there one that you think lied?”

No answer.

“Now it seems to me — ” said a third juryman.

“One thing at a time, gentlemen,” said the foreman. “Let us wait for an answer from Mr. Smith. Is there any one that you think lied? We will wait, gentlemen, for an answer.”

There was a long pause. The trial seemed to Eli Smith to have shifted from the court to this shabby room, and he was now the culprit.

All waited for him; all eyes were fixed upon him.

The clock ticked loud! Eli counted the seconds. He knew the determination of the foreman.

The silence became intense.

“I want to say my say,” said a short man in a pea-jacket, — a retired San Francisco pilot, named Eldridge. “I entertain no doubt the man is guilty. At the same time, I allow for differences of opinion. I don’t know this man that’s

voted 'not guilty,' but he seems to be a well-meaning man. I don't know his reasons; probably he don't understand the case. I should like to have the foreman tell the evidence over, so as if he don't see it clear, he can ask questions, and we can explain."

"I second de motion," said George Washington.

There was a general rustle of approval.

"I move it," said the pilot, encouraged.

"Very well, Mr. Eldridge," said the foreman. "If there is no objection, I will state the evidence, and if there is any loop-hole, I will trouble Mr. Smith to suggest it as I go along;" and he proceeded to give a summary of the testimony, with homely force.

"Now, sir?" he said, when he had finished.

"I move for another ballot," said Mr. Eldridge.

The result was the same. Eli had voted "not guilty."

"Mr. Smith," said the foreman, "this must be settled in some way. This is no child's play. You can't keep eleven men here, trifling with them, giving no pretence of a reason."

"I have n't no reasons, only that I don't be-

lieve he 's guilty," said Eli. " I 'm not goin' to vote a man into State's-prison, when I don't believe he done it," and he rose and walked to the window and looked out. It was low tide. There was a broad stretch of mud in the distance, covered with boats lying over disconsolate. A driving storm had emptied the streets. He beat upon the rain-dashed glass a moment with his fingers, and then he sat down again.

" Well, sir," said the foreman, " this is singular conduct. What do you propose to do? "

Silence.

" I suppose you realize that the rest of us are pretty rapidly forming a conclusion on this matter," said the foreman.

" Come ! come ! " said Mr. Eldridge ; " don't be quite so hard on him, Captain. Now, Mr. Smith," he said, standing up with his hands in his coat-pockets and looking at Eli, " we know that there often is crooked sticks on juries, that hold out alone — that 's to be expected ; but they always argue, and stand to it the rest are fools, and all that. Now, all is, we don't see why you don't sort of argué, if you 've got reasons satisfactory to you. Come, now," he added,

walking up to Eli, and resting one foot on the seat of his chair, "why don't you tell it over? and if we're wrong, I'm ready to join you."

Eli looked up at him.

"Did n't you ever know," he said, "of a man's takin' a cat off, to lose, that his little girl did n't want drownded, and leavin' him ashore, twenty or thirty miles, bee-line, from home, and that cat's bein' back again the next day, purrin' 'round 's if nothin' had happened?"

"Yes," said Mr. Eldridge — "knew of just such a case."

"Very well," said Eli; "how does he find his way home?"

"Don't know," said Mr. Eldridge; "always has been a standing mystery to me."

"Well," said Eli, "mark my words. There's such a thing as arguin', and there's such a thing as knowin' outright; and when you'll tell me how that cat inquires his way home, I'll tell you how I know John Wood ain't guilty."

This made a certain sensation, and Eli's stock went up.

An old, withered man rapped on the table.

"That's so!" he said; "and there's other

sing'lar things ! How is it that a seafarin' man, that 's dyin' to home, will allers die on the ebb-tide? It never fails, but how does it happen? Tell me that ! And there 's more ways than one of knowin' things, too ! ”

“ I know that man ain't guilty,” said Eli.

“ Hark ye ! ” said a dark old man with a troubled face, rising and pointing his finger toward Eli. “ *Know*, you say? I *knew*, wunst. I *knew* that my girl, my only child, was good. One night she went off with a married man that worked in my store, and stole my money — and where is she now? ” And then he added, “ What I *know* is, that every man hes his price. I hev mine, and you hev yourn ! ”

“ 'Xcuse me, Mr. Speaker,” said George Washington, rising with his hand in his bosom; “ as de question is befo' us, I wish to say that de las' bro' mus' have spoken under 'xcitement. Every man *don'* have his price ! An' I hope de bro' will recant — like as de Psalmist goes out o' his way to say '*In my haste* I said, All men are liars.' He was a very busy man, de Psalmist — writin' down hymns all day, sharpen'n' his lead-pencil, bossin' 'roun' de choir — callin' Selah ! Well,

bro'n an' sisters" — both arms going out, and his voice going up — "one day, seems like, he was in gre't haste — got to finish a psalm for a monthly concert, or such — and some man incorrupted him, and lied; and bein' in gre't haste — and a little old Adam in him — he says, right off, quick: '*All* men are liars!' But see! When he gits a little time to set back and meditate, he says: 'Dis won'do — dere's Moses an' Job, an' Paul — dey ain't liars!' An' den he don' sneak out, and 'low he said, 'All men is lions,' or such. No! de Psalmist ain't no such man; but he owns up, 'an 'explains. '*In my haste*,' he says, 'I said it.'"

The foreman rose and rapped.

"I await a motion," said he, "if our friend will allow me the privilege of speaking."

Mr. Washington calmly bowed.

Then the foreman, when nobody seemed disposed to move, speaking slowly at first, and piecemeal, alternating language with smoke, gradually edged into the current of the evidence, and ended by going all over it again, with fresh force and point. His cigar glowed and chilled in the darkening room as he talked.

"Now," he said, when he had drawn all the threads together to the point of guilt, "what are we going to do upon this evidence?"

"I'll tell you something," said Eli. "I did n't want to say it because I know what you'll all think, but I'll tell you, all the same."

"Ah!" said the foreman.

Eli stood up and faced the others.

"Most all o' you know what our Bar is in a southeast gale. They ain't a man here that would dare to try and cross it when the sea 's breakin' on it. The man that says he would, lies!" And he looked at the foreman, and waited a moment.

"When my wife took sick, and I stopped goin' to sea, two year ago, and took up boat-fishin', I did n't know half as much about the coast as the young boys do, and one afternoon it was blowin' a gale, and we was all hands comin' in, and passin' along the Bar to go sheer 'round it to the west'ard, and Captain Fred Cook — he's short-sighted — got on to the Bar before he knew it, and then he hed to go ahead, whether or no; and I was right after him, and I s'posed he knew, and I followed him. Well, he was floated over, as luck was, all right; but when

I 'd just got on the Bar, a roller dropped back and let my bowsprit down into the sand, and then come up quicker'n lightnin' and shouledered the boat over, t' other end first, and slung me into the water; and when I come up, I see somethin' black, and there was John Wood's boat runnin' b'y me before the wind with a rush — and 'fore I knew an'thing, he had me by the hair by one hand, and in his boat, and we was over the Bar. Now, I tell you, a man that looks the way I saw him look when I come over the gunwale, face up, don't go 'round breakin' in and hookin' things. He hed n't one chance in five, and he was a married man, too, with small children. And what's more," he added incautiously, "he did n't stop there. When he found out, this last spring, that I was goin' to lose my place, he lent me money enough to pay the interest that was overdue on the mortgage, of his own accord."

And he stopped suddenly.

"You have certainly explained yourself," said the foreman. "I think we understand you distinctly."

"There is n't one word of truth in that idea,"

said Eli, flushing up, "and you know it. I've paid him back every cent. I know him better'n any of you, that's all, and when I know he ain't guilty, I won't say he is; and I can set here as long as any other man."

"Lively times some folks 'll hev, when they go home," said a spare tin-pedler, stroking his long yellow goatee. "Go into the store: nobody speak to you; go to cattle-show: everybody follow you 'round; go to the wharf: nobody weigh your fish; go to buy seed-cakes to the cart: baker won't give no tick."

"How much does it cost, Mr. Foreman," said the butcher, "for a man 't's obliged to leave town, to move a family out West? I only ask for information. I have known a case where a man had to leave — could n't live there no longer — wa' n't wanted."

There was a knock. An officer, sent by the judge, inquired whether the jury were likely soon to agree.

"It rests with you, sir," said the foreman, looking at Eli.

But Eli sat doggedly with his hands in his pockets, and did not look up or speak.

"Say to the judge that I cannot tell," said the foreman.

It was eight o'clock when the officer returned, with orders to take the jury across the street to the hotel, to supper. They went out in pairs, except that the juryman who was left to fall in with Eli made three with the file ahead, and left Eli to walk alone. This was noticed by the bystanders. At the hotel, Eli could not eat a mouthful. He was seated at one end of the table, and was left entirely out of the conversation. When the jury were escorted back to the courthouse, rumors had evidently begun to arise from his having walked alone, for there was quite a little crowd at the hotel door, to see them. They went as before: four pairs, a file of three, and Eli alone. Then the spectators understood it.

When the jury were locked into their room again for the night, Mr. Eldridge sat down by Eli and lit his pipe.

"I understand," he said, "just how you feel. Now, between you and me, there was a good-hearted fellow that kept me out of a bad mess once. I've never told anybody just what it

was, and I don't mean to tell you now, but it brought my blood up standing, to find how near I'd come to putting a fine steamer and two hundred and forty passengers under water. Well, one day, a year or so after that, this man had a chance to get a good ship, only there was some talk against him, that he drank a little. Well, the owners told him they wanted to see me, and he come to me, and says he, 'Mr. Eldridge, I hope you 'll speak a good word for me; if you do, I 'll get the ship, but if they refuse me this one, I 'm dished everywhere.' Well, the owners put me the square question, and I had to tell 'em. Well, I met him that afternoon on Sacramento Street, as white as a sheet, and he would n't speak to me, but passed right by, and that night he went and shipped before the mast. That's the last I ever heard of him; but I had to do it. Now," he added, "this man 's been good to you; but the case is proved, and you ought to vote with the rest of us."

"It ain't proved," said Eli. "The judge said that if any man had a reasonable doubt, he ought to hold out. Now, I ain't convinced."

“Well, that’s easy said,” replied Mr. Eldridge, a little hotly, and he arose, and left him.

The jurymen broke up into little knots, tilted their chairs back, and settled into the easiest positions that their cramped quarters allowed. Most of them lit their pipes; the captain, and one or two whom he honored, smoked fragrant cigars, and the room was soon filled with a dense cloud.

Eli sat alone by the window.

“Sometimes sell two at one house,” said a lank book-agent, arousing himself from a reverie; “once sold three.”

“I think the Early Rose is about as profitable as any,” said a little farmer, with a large circular beard. “I used to favor Jacobs’s Seedling, but they haven’t done so well with me of late years.”

“Sometimes,” said the book-agent, picking his teeth with a quill, “you’ll go to a house, and they’ll say they can’t be induced to buy a book of any kind, historical, fictitious, or religious; but you just keep on talking, and show the pictures—‘Grant in Boyhood,’ ‘Grant a Tanner,’ ‘Grant at Head-quarters,’ ‘Grant in the

White House,' 'Grant before Queen Victoria,' and they warm up, I tell you, and not infrequently buy."

"Do you sell de 'Illustrated Bible,'" asked Washington, "wid de Hypocrypha?"

"No; I have a more popular treatise — the 'Illustrated History of the Bible.' Greater variety. Brings in the surrounding nations, in costume. Cloth, three dollars; sheep, three-fifty; half calf, five-seventy-five; full morocco, gilt edges, seven-fifty. Six hundred and seven illustrations on wood and steel. Three different engravings of Abraham alone. Four of Noah, — 'Noah before the Flood,' 'Noah Building the Ark,' 'Noah Welcoming the Dove,' 'Noah on Ararat.' Steel engraving of Ezekiel's Wheel, explaining prophecy. Jonah under the gourd, Nineveh in the distance."

Mr. Eldridge and Captain Thomas had drifted into a discussion of harbors, and the captain had drawn his chair up to the table, and, with a cigar in his mouth, was explaining an ingeniously constructed foreign harbor. He was making a rough sketch, with a pen.

"Here is north," he said; "here is the coast-

line; here are the flats; here are the sluice-gates; they store the water here, in — ”

Some of the younger men had their heads together, in a corner, about the tin-pedler, who was telling stories of people he had met in his journeys, which brought out repeated bursts of laughter.

In the corner farthest from Eli, a delicate-looking man began to tell the butcher about Eli's wife.

“Twelve years ago this fall,” he said, “I taught district-school in the parish where she lived. She was about fourteen then. Her father was a poor farmer, without any faculty. Her mother was dead, and she kept house. I stayed there one week, boarding 'round.”

“Prob'ly did n't git not much of any fresh meat that week,” suggested the butcher.

“She never said much, but it used to divert me to see her order around her big brothers, just as if she was their mother. She and I got to be great friends; but she was a queer piece. One day at school the girls in her row were communicating, and annoying me, while the third class was reciting in ‘First Steps in Num-

bers,' and I was so incensed that I called Lizzie — that 's her name — right out, and had her stand up for twenty minutes. She was a shy little thing, and set great store by perfect marks. I saw that she was troubled a good deal, to have all of them looking and laughing at her. But she stood there, with her hands folded behind her, and not a smile or a word."

"Look out for a sullen cow," said the butcher.

"I felt afraid I had been too hasty with her, and I was rather sorry I had been so decided — although, to be sure, she did n't pretend to deny that she had been communicating."

"Of course," said the butcher: "no use lyin' when you 're caught in the act."

"Well, after school, she stayed at her desk, fixing her dinner-pail, and putting her books in a strap, and all that, till all the rest had gone, and then she came up to my desk, where I was correcting compositions."

"Now for music!" said the butcher.

"She had been crying a little. Well, she looked straight in my face, and said she, 'Mr. Pollard, I just wanted to say to you that I

was n't doing anything at all when you called me up ; ' and off she went. Now, that was just like her,—too proud to say a word before the school."

But here his listener's attention was diverted by the voice of the book-agent.

"The very best Bible for teachers, of course, is the limp-cover, protected edges, full Levant morocco, Oxford, silk-sewed, kid-lined, Bishop's Divinity Circuit, with concordance, maps of the Holy Land, weights, measures, and money-tables of the Jews. Nothing like having a really — "

"And so," said the captain, moving back his chair, "they let on the whole head of water, and scour out the channel to a T."

And then he rapped upon the table.

"Gentlemen," he said, "please draw your chairs up, and let us take another ballot."

The count resulted as before.

The foreman muttered something which had a scriptural sound. In a few moments he drew Mr. Eldridge and two others aside. "Gentlemen," he said to them, "I shall quietly divide the jury into watches, under your charge: ten

can sleep, while one wakes to keep Mr. Smith discussing the question. I don't propose to have the night wasted."

And, by one man or another, Eli was kept awake.

"I don't see," said the book-agent, "why you should feel obliged to stick it out any longer. Of course, you are under obligations. But you've done more than enough already, so as that he can't complain of you, and if you give in now, everybody 'll give you credit for trying to save your friend, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, for giving in to the evidence. So you 'll get credit both ways."

An hour later, the tin-pedler came on duty. He had not followed closely the story about John Wood's loan, and had got it a little awry.

"Now, how foolish you be," he said, in a confidential tone. "Can't you see that if you cave in now, after stan'n' out nine hours"—and he looked at a silver watch with a brass chain, and stroked his goatee—"nine hours and twenty-seven minutes—that you've made jest rumpus enough so as 't he won't dare to foreclose

on you, for fear they 'll say you went back on a trade. On t' other hand, if you hold clear out, he 'll turn you out-o'-doors to-morrow, for a blind, so 's to look as if there wa' n't no trade between you. Once he gits off, he won't know Joseph, you bet! That's what I 'd do," he added, with a sly laugh. "Take your uncle's advice."

"The only trouble with that," said Eli, shortly, "is that I don't owe him anything."

"Oh," said the pedler; "that makes a difference. I understood you did."

Three o'clock came, and brought Mr. Eldridge. He found Eli worn out with excitement.

"Now, I don't judge you the way the others do," said Mr. Eldridge, in a low tone, with his hand on Eli's knee. "I know, as I told you, just the way you feel. But we can't help such things. Suppose, now, that I had kept dark, and allowed to the owners that that man was always sober, and I had heard, six months after, of thirty or forty men going to the bottom because the captain was a little off his base; and then to think of their wives and children at home.

We have to do some hard things; but I say, do the square thing, and let her slide."

"But I can't believe he's guilty," said Eli.

"But don't you allow," said Mr. Eldridge, "that eleven men are more sure to hit it right than one man?"

"Yes," said Eli, reluctantly, "as a general thing."

"Well, there's always got to be some give to a jury, just as in everything else, and you ought to lay right down on the rest of us. It is n't as if we were at all squirmish. Now, you know that if you hold out, he'll be tried again."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Got to be — no other way," said Mr. Eldridge. "Now, the next time, there won't be anybody like you to stand out, and the judge'll know of this scrape, and he'll just sock it to him."

Eli turned uneasily in his chair.

"And then it won't be understood in your place, and folks'll turn against you every way, and, what's worse, let you alone."

"I can stand it," said Eli, angrily. "Let 'em do as they like. They can't kill me."

"They can kill your wife and break down your children," said Mr. Eldridge. "Women and children can't stand it. Now, there's that man they were speaking of; he lived down my way. He sued a poor, shiftless fellow that had come from Pennsylvania to his daughter's funeral, and had him arrested and taken off, crying, just before the funeral begun—after they'd even set the flowers on the coffin; and nobody'd speak to him after that—they just let him alone; and after a while his wife took sick of it—she was a nice, kindly woman—and she had sort of hysterics, and finally he moved off West. And 't was n't long before the woman died. Now, you can't undertake to do different from everybody else."

"Well," said Eli, "I know I wish it was done with."

Mr. Eldridge stretched his arms and yawned. Then he began to walk up and down, and hum, out of tune. Then he stopped at Captain Thomas's chair.

"Suppose we try a ballot," he said. "He seems to give a little."

In a moment the foreman rapped.

"It is time we were taking another ballot, gentlemen," he said.

The sleepers rose, grumbling, from uneasy dreams.

"I will write 'guilty' on twelve ballots," said the foreman, "and if any one desires to write in 'not,' of course he can."

When the hat came to Eli, he took one of the ballots and held it in his hand a moment, and then he laid it on the table. There was a general murmur. The picture which Mr. Eldridge had drawn loomed up before him. But with a hasty hand he wrote in "not," dropped in the ballot, and going back to his chair by the window, sat down.

There was a cold wave of silence.

Then Eli suddenly walked up to the foreman and faced him.

"Now," he said, "we 'll stop. The very next turn breaks ground. If you, or any other man that you set on, tries to talk to me when I don't want to hear, to worry me to death—look out!"

How the long hours wore on! How easy, sometimes, to resist an open pressure, and how hard, with the resistance gone, to fight, as one

that beats the air! How the prospect of a whole hostile town loomed up, in a mirage, before Eli! And then the picture rose before him of a long, stately bark, now building, whose owner had asked him yesterday to be first mate. And if his wife were only well, and he were only free from this night's trouble, how soon, upon the long, green waves, he could begin to redeem his little home!

And then came Mr. Eldridge, kind and friendly, to have another little chat.

Morning came, cold and drizzly. An officer knocked at the door, and called out, "Breakfast!" And in a moment, unwashed, and all uncombed, except the tin-pedler, who always carried a beard-comb in his pocket, they were marched across the street to the hotel.

There were a number of men on the piazza waiting to see them,—jurymen, witnesses, and the accused himself, for he was on bail. He had seen the procession the night before, and, like the others, had read its meaning.

"Eli knows I would n't do it," he had said to himself, "and he's going to hang out, sure."

The jury began to turn from the court-house door. Everybody looked. A file of two men, another file, another, another; would there come three men, and then one? No; Eli no longer walked alone.

Everybody looked at Wood; he turned sharply away.

But this time the order of march in fact showed nothing, one way or the other. It only meant that the judge, who had happened to see the jury the night before returning from their supper, had sent for the high sheriff in some temper,—for judges are human,—and had vigorously intimated that if that statesman did not look after his fool of a deputy, who let a jury parade secrets to the public view, he would!

The jury were in their room again. At nine o'clock came a rap, and a summons from the court. The prosecuting attorney was speaking with the judge when they went in. In a moment he took his seat.

"John Wood!" called out the clerk, and the defendant arose. His attorney was not there.

"Mr. Foreman!" said the judge, rising. The

jury arose. The silence of the crowded court-room was intense.

"Before the clerk asks you for a verdict, gentlemen," said the judge, "I have something of the first importance to say to you, which has but this moment come to my knowledge."

Eli changed color, and the whole court-room looked at him.

"There were some most singular rumors, after the case was given to you, gentlemen, to the effect that there had been in this cause a criminal abuse of justice. It is painful to suspect, and shocking to know, that courts and juries are liable ever to suffer by such unprincipled practices. After ten years upon the bench, I never witness a conviction of crime without pain; but that pain is light, compared with the distress of knowing of a wilful perversion of justice. It is a relief to me to be able to say to you that such instances are, in my judgment, exceedingly rare, and — so keen is the awful searching power of truth — are almost invariably discovered."

The foreman touched his neighbor with his elbow. Eli folded his arms.

"As I said," continued the judge, "there were most singular rumors. During the evening and the night, rumor, as is often the case, led to evidence, and evidence has led to confession and to certainty. And the district attorney now desires me to say to you that the chief officer of the bank—who held the second key to the safe—is now under arrest for a heavy defalcation, which a sham robbery was to conceal, and that you may find the prisoner at the bar—not guilty. I congratulate you, gentlemen, that you had not rendered an adverse verdict."

"Your Honor!" said Eli, and he cleared his throat, "I desire it to be known that, even as the case stood last night, this jury had not agreed to convict, and never would have!"

There was a hush, while a loud scratching pen indorsed the record of acquittal. Then Wood walked down to the jury-box and took Eli's hand.

"Just what I told my wife all through," he said. "I knew you'd hang out!"

Eli's jury was excused for the rest of the day, and by noon he was in his own village, relieved,

too, of his most pressing burden: for George Cahoon had met him on the road, and told him that he was not going to the West, after all, for the present, and should not need his money. But, as he turned the bend of the road and neared his house, he felt a rising fear that some disturbing rumor might have reached his wife about his action on the jury. And, to his distress and amazement, there she was, sitting in a chair at the door.

“Lizzie!” he said, “what does this mean? Are you crazy?”

“I’ll tell you what it means,” she said, as she stood up with a little smile and clasped her hands behind her. “This morning it got around and came to me that you was standing out all alone for John Wood, and that the talk was that they’d be down on you, and drive you out of town, and that everybody pitied *me*,—*pitied me!* And when I heard that, I thought I’d see! And my strength seemed to come all back, and I got right up and dressed myself. And what’s more, I’m going to get well now!”

And she did.



BY THE SEA.

I.

ON the southeastern coast of Massachusetts is a small village with which I was once familiarly acquainted. It differs little in its general aspect from other hamlets scattered along that shore. It has its one long, straggling street, plain and homelike, from which at two or three different points a winding lane leads off and ends abruptly in the water.

Fifty years ago the village had a business activity of its own. There still remain the vestiges of a wharf at a point where once was a hammering ship-yard. Here and there, in bare fields along the sea, are the ruins of vats and windmills, — picturesque remains of ancient salt-works.

There is no visible sign left now of the noisy life of the ship-yards, except a marble stone

beneath a willow in the burying-ground on the hill, which laments the untimely death of a youth of nineteen, killed in 1830 in the launching of a brig. But traces of the salt-works everywhere remain, in frequent sheds and small barns which are wet and dry, as the saying is, all the time, and will not hold paint. They are built of salt-boards.

There were a good many of the people of the village and its adjoining country who interested me very greatly. I am going to tell you a simple event which happened in one of its families, deeply affecting its little history.

James Parsons was a man perhaps sixty years of age, strongly built, gray-haired, clean-shaven except for the conventional seaman's fringe of beard below the chin, and always exquisitely neat. Whether you met him in his best suit, on Sunday morning, or in his old clothes, going to his oyster-beds or his cranberry-marsh, it was always the same. He was usually in his shirt-sleeves in summer. His white cotton shirt, with its easy collar and wrist-bands, seemed always to have just come from

the ironing-board. "It ain't no trouble at all to keep James clean," I have heard Mrs. Parsons say, in her funny little way; "he picks his way round for all the world just like a pussy-cat, and never gets no spots on him, nowhere."

You saw at once, upon the slightest acquaintance with James, that while he was of the same general civilization as his neighbors, he was of a different type. In his narrowness, there was a peculiar breadth and vigor which characterized him. He had about him the atmosphere of a wider ocean.

His early reminiscences were all of that picturesque and adventurous life which prevailed along our coasts to within forty years, and his conversation was suggestive of it. He held a silver medal from the Humane Society for conspicuous bravery in the rescue of the crew of a ship stranded in winter in a storm of sleet off Post Hill Bar. He had a war-hatchet, for which he had negotiated face to face with a naked cannibal in the South Sea. He was familiar with the Hoogly.

His language savored always of the sea. His hens "turned in," at night. He was full of says

and formulas of a maritime nature; there was one which always seemed to me to have something of a weird and mystic character: "South moon brings high water on Coast Island Bar." In describing the transactions of domestic life, he used words more properly applicable to the movements of large ships. He would speak of a saucepan as if it weighed a hundred tons. He never tossed or threw even the slightest object; he hove it. "Why, father!" said Mrs. Parsons, surprised at seeing him for a moment untidy; "what have you ben doing? Your boots and trousers-legs is all white!" "Yes," said Mr. Parsons, apologetically, looking down upon his dusty garments, "I just took that bucket of ashes and hove 'em into the hen-house."

The word "heave," in fact, was always upon his tongue. It applied to everything. "How was this road straightened out?" I asked him one day; "did the town vote to do it?" "No, no," he said quickly; "there was n't never no vote. The se-lec'men just come along one day, and got us all together, and hove in and hove out; and we altered our fences to suit."

I remember hearing him testify as a witness to a will. It appeared that the testator was sick in bed when he signed the instrument. He was suffering greatly, and when he was to sign, it was necessary to lift him with the extremest care, to turn him to the light-stand. "State what was done next," the lawyer asked of James. "Captain Frost was laying on his left side," said James. "Two of us took a holt of him and rolled him over."

He had probably not the least suspicion that his language had a maritime flavor. I asked him one night, as we coasted along toward home, "What do seafaring men call the track of light that the moon makes on the water? They must have some name for it." "No, no," he said, "they don't have no name for it; they just call it 'the wake of the moon.'"

James's learning had been chiefly gained from the outside world and not from books. I have heard him lay it down as a fact that the word "Bible" had its etymology from the word "by-bill" (hand-bill). "It was writ," he said, "in small parcels, and they was passed around by them that writ 'em, like by-bills; and so when

they hove it all into one, they called it the 'Bible.'"

But while James had little learning himself, he appreciated it highly in others. I had occasion to ask him once why it was that the son of one of his neighbors, in closing up his father's estate, had not settled his accounts regularly in the probate court. "Oh, I know how that was," he replied; "he settled 'em the other way. You see, he went to the college at Woonsocket, and he learned there how to settle accounts the other way: and that 's the way he settled 'em." And then he added, "When Alvin left the college, they giv' him a book that tells how to do all kinds of business, and what you want to do so 's to make money; and Alvin has always followed them rules. The consequence is, he 's made money, and what he 's made, he 's kep' it. I suppose he 's worth not less than sixteen hundred dollars."

Sometimes he would venture a remark of a gallant nature. "They don't generally git the lights in the hall so as to suit me," he once said. "I don't want it too light, because then it hurts my eyes; but I want it light enough so as 't I can see the women!"

James was a large, strong man, but Mrs. Parsons, although she was little and slight, and was always ailing, constantly assumed the rôle of her husband's nurse and protector, not only in household matters, but in other affairs of life. Whenever she had visitors,—and she and James were hospitable in the extreme,—she was pretty sure to end up, sooner or later, if James were present, with some droll criticism of him, as much to his delight as to hers.

James sometimes liked to affect a certain harshness of demeanor; but the disguise was a transparent one. How well do I remember the time—oh, so long ago!—when for some reason or other I happened to have his boat instead of my own, one day, with one of the boys of the village, to go to Matamet, twelve miles off, to visit certain lobster-pots which we had set. We were delayed there by breaking our boom, in jibing. We should have been at home at noon; at seven in the evening we were not yet in sight. When we got in, rather crestfallen at our disaster, particularly as the boat was wanted for the next day, James met us at the pier. We were boys then, and his tongue was free. As he stood

there on the shore, bare-headed, hastily summoned from his house, with his hair blowing in the wind, waving his hands and addressing first us and then a knot of men who stood smoking by, no words of censure were too harsh, no comment on our carelessness too cutting, no laments too keen over the irreparable loss of that particular boom. The next time I could take my own boat, if I were going to get cast away. And I remember well how he ended his tirade. "I did n't care nothing about you two," he said. "If you want to git drownded, git drownded; it ain't nothing to me. All I was afraid of was that you 'd gone and capsized my boat, and would n't never turn up to tell where you sunk her. But as for you—" and he laughed a laugh of heartless indifference.

But ten minutes later, and right before his face, at his own front gate, Mrs. Parsons betrayed him. "I never see father so worried," she said, "sence the time he heard about Thomas; why, he 's spent the whole afternoon as nervous as a hawk, going up on the hill with his spy-glass; and I don't feel so sure but what he was crying. He said he did n't care

nothing about the boat,—‘What’s that old boat!’ says he; but if you boys was drownded out of her, he wouldn’t never git over it.” At which James, being so unmasked, laughed in a shamefaced way, and shook us by the shoulders.

He had a son who carried on some sort of half-maritime business on one of the wharves, in the city, and lived over his shop. When James went at intervals to visit him, he made his way at once from the railway station to the nearest wharf; then he followed the line of the water around to the shop. Where jib-booms project out over the sidewalk, one feels so thoroughly at home! From the shop he would make short adventurous excursions up Commercial Street and State Street, sometimes going no farther than the nautical-instrument store on the corner of Broad Street, sometimes venturing to Washington Street, or even moving for a short distance up or down in the current of that gay thoroughfare. He loved to comment satirically on the city, with a broad humorous sense of his own strangeness there. “The city folks don’t seem to have nothing to do,” he said. “They seem to be all out, walking up

and down the streets. Come noon, I thought there'd be some let-up for dinner; but they did n't seem to want nothing to eat; they kep' right on walking."

I must not leave James Parsons without telling you of two whale's teeth which stand on his parlor mantel-piece; he ornamented them himself, copying the designs from cheap foreign prints. One of them is what he calls "the meeting-house." It is the high altar of the Cathedral of Seville. On the other is "the wild-beast tamer." A man with a feeble, wishy-washy expression holds by each hand a fierce, but subjugated tiger. His legs dangle loosely in the air. There is nothing to suggest what upholds him in his mighty contest.

II.

NOW we must turn from James Parsons to a man of a different type, or rather of a different variety of the same type; for they descend alike from original founders of the town, and, like most of their fellow-townsmen, are both of unqualified Pilgrim stock.

To get to Captain Joseph Pelham's house, you have to drive along a range of hills for some miles, skirting the sea; then you come, half-way, to a bright modern village with trees along the main street, with houses and fences kept painted up, for the most part, but here and there relieved by an unpainted dwelling of a past generation.

Here you have an option. You may either pursue your road through the high-lying prosperous street, with peeps of salt water to the right, or you may turn sharply off at a little store and descend to the lower road. It is always a struggle to choose.

The road to the beach descends a sharp, gravelly hill, and crosses a bridge. Then you come out on a waste of salt-marsh, threaded by the creek, broken by wild, fantastic sand-hills, grown over by beach-grass which will cut your fingers like a knife. You drive close along the white, precipitous beach; you pass the long, shaky pier, with half-decayed fish-houses at the other end, and picturesque heaps of fish-cars, seines, and barrels. Then the road, following the shore a little longer, climbs the hill and enters the woods. Two miles more and you come

out to fields with mossy fences, and occasional houses.

The houses begin to be more frequent. All at once you enter the main street of W—.

In a moment you see that you have come into a new atmosphere. There is a large modern church among the older ones. There are large, fine houses, some old-fashioned, others new. By some miraculous intervention Queen Anne has not as yet made her appearance. There are handsome, well-filled stores, going into no little refinement in stock. There is, of course, a small brick library, built by the bounty of a New Yorker who was born here. There is a brick national bank, and a face brick block occupied above by Freemasons, orders of Red Men, Knights Templars, and the Pool of Siloam Lodge, I. O. O. F., and below by a savings bank and a local marine insurance company.

It is here that we shall find Captain Joseph Pelham. If a stranger has occasion to inquire for the leading men of the place he is always first referred to him. It is he who heads every list and is the chairman of every meeting. When a certain public man, commanding but

a small following here, appeared, upon his campaign tour, and found no one to escort him to the platform and preside, so that he was obliged to justify his appearance here by the Scripture passage, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick;" at the moment of entering the hall, closely packed with curious opponents, disposed perhaps to be derisive when the situation for the visitor was embarrassing in the extreme,— it was Captain Joseph Pelham who, though the bitterest opponent of them all, rose from his seat, gave the speaker his arm, escorted him to the platform, presented him with grave courtesy to the audience, and sat beside him through the entire discourse.

While Captain Pelham continued to go to sea, and after that, until he was made president of the insurance company, he lived a mile or two out of the town, in a house he had inherited. It is picturesquely situated, on a bare hill, with a wide view of the inland and the ocean. As you look down from its south windows, the cluster of houses nestling together at the shore below stand sharply out against the water. It

is one of those white houses common in our older towns,—two-storied, long on the street, with the front door in the middle. Of the interior it is enough to say that its owner had sailed for thirty years to Hong-Kong, Calcutta and Madras. It had a prevailing odor of teak and lacquer. In the front hall was a vast china cane-holder; a turreted Calcutta hat hung on the hat-tree; a heavy, varnished Chinese umbrella stood in a corner; a long and handsome settee from Java stood against the wall. In the parlors, on either hand, were Chinese tables shutting up like telescopes, elaborate rattan chairs of different kinds, and numberless other things of this sort, which had plainly been honestly come by, and not bought.

Then, if you met the Captain's favor, he would show you with becoming pride some family relics, and tell you about them. They came mostly from his paternal grandfather, who was a shipmaster too, had commanded a privateer in the Revolution, and made a fortune. There were a number of pieces of handsome furniture,—these you could see for yourself. What would be shown you, with a half-diffident

air, would be: a silver mug; two Revere table-spoons; a few tiny teaspoons marked F.; a handsome sword and scabbard; a yellow satin waistcoat and small-clothes; portraits, not artistic, but effective, of his grandfather, in a velvet coat and knee-breeches, with a long spy-glass in his hand, and of his grandmother, a strong, matter-of-fact looking woman, handsomely dressed.

But the thing which the Captain secretly treasured most, but brought out last, was his grandmother's Dutch Bible. It is a curious old book; you can see it still if you wish. It has an elaborate frontispiece. Sixteen cuts of leading incidents in Scripture history conduct you by gentle stages, from Eden, through the offering of Isaac, to the close of the Evangelists, and surround Dr. Martin Luther, who, in a gown, holds back the curtains of a pillared alcove, to show you, through two windows, an Old and a New Testament landscape, and a lady sitting beneath a canopy, with an open volume. The covers are of thick bevelled board covered with leather. There was once a heavy clasp. The edges are richly gilded, and figures are pricked

in the gilding. It is very handsomely printed. It was in the possession, in 1760, of a young New England girl, the Captain's grandmother. There is a story about it,—a story too long to tell here. Suffice it to say that the Captain's ancestor, who settled early in New England, came from Leyden shortly after Mr. John Robinson. A hundred years later and more, in the oddest way, an acquaintance sprang up with certain Dutch connections, and in the course of it this Bible, then new and elegant, found its way over the sea as a gift to young Mistress Preston. In New England, and as a relic of the early ties of our people with Holland, momentarily renewed after a century had passed away, it is probably unique. It was a last farewell from Holland to her English children, before she parted company with them forever.

I have told you about this house, as I recall it, although Captain Pelham had now ceased to live there, because it was there alone that he seemed completely at home. Furnished as it was from the four quarters of the globe, everything seemed to fit in with his ways. He supplemented the Chinese tables, and they supple-

mented him. But when he ceased to go to sea, in late middle life, and settled down at home upon his competency, and began a little later to become interested in public matters ; when he was at last made president of the insurance company, a director in the bank, and a trustee in the savings bank, and when affairs were left more and more to his control, it became convenient for him to get into town ; and his wife and daughter were perhaps ambitious for the change.

So he had sold his house by the sea, and had bought a large and somewhat pretentious one on the main street, with a cast-iron summer arbor, and a bay-window closed in for a conservatory. He had furnished it from the city with new Brussels carpet, with a parlor set, a sitting-room set, a dining-room set, and chamber sets ; and the antique things which had given his former home an air of charming picturesqueness were for the most part tucked away in unnoticed corners.

The Captain never seemed to me to have become quite naturalized in his new home. He never belonged to the furniture, or the furniture to him. The place where you saw him best in

these later days was in the office of his insurance company, or in the little business-room of one of the banks, surrounded by a knot of more substantial townsmen, or talking patiently with some small farmer or seafaring man seeking for insurance or a loan. One of the most marked features of his character was a certain patience and considerateness which made all borrowers apply by preference to him. He would sit down at his little table with a plain man whose affairs were in disorder, and listen with close attention to his application for a loan. Somehow the man would find himself disclosing all the particulars of his distress. Then Captain Pelham, in his quiet way, would go over the whole matter with him; would plan with him on his concerns; would try to see if it were not possible to postpone a little the payment of debts and to hasten the collection of claims; to get a part of the money for a short time from a son in Boston or a married daughter in New Bedford; and so, by pulling and hauling, to weather the Cape.

I must say a word about his position in town matters. He had been at sea the greater part of the time from sixteen to fifty-two. During that

time he had had absolutely no concern with political affairs. He had never voted: for he had never, as it had happened, been ashore at the time of an election. And yet before he had been at home six years he was one of the selectmen of the town and overseer of the poor, and had become familiar with the details of Massachusetts town government, superficially so simple, in fact so complex. It was a large town, of no small wealth. Lying as it did along the seaboard, where havoc was always being made by disasters of the sea, there was not only a larger number than in an inland town of persons actually quartered in the poorhouse, but there were many broken families who had to be helped in their own homes. And it was to me an interesting fact that in dealing with two score households of this class, Captain Pelham, who had spent most of his time at sea, was able to display the utmost tact and judgment. He applied to their affairs that same plain kindness and sound sense which he showed in the matter of discounts at the bank.

While the friendships of Captain Pelham were chiefly in his own town, his acquaintance was not

confined to it. In his own quiet, unpretending way he was something of a man of the world. He was known in the marine insurance offices in the large cities. He had been familiar all his life with large affairs; he had commanded valuable ships, loaded with fortunes in teas and silks, in the days when an India captain was a merchant.

III.

YOU will ask me why it is that I have been telling you about these men, and what it is that connects them.

It was now ten years since Captain Pelham's only son, himself at twenty-two the master of a vessel, had married a daughter of James Parsons,—a tall, impulsive, and warm-hearted girl,—one of those girls to whom children always cling. Both James Parsons's daughters had proved attractive and had married well. It had been a disappointment in Captain Pelham's household, perhaps, that this son, their especial pride, should not have married into one of the wealthy families in his own village. At first there had been

a little visiting to and fro; it had lasted but a little time, and then the two households had settled down, as the way is in the country, to follow each its own natural course of living. George Pelham's wife had always lived in an odd little house, all doors and windows, near by her father, in her native village.

It was from Porto Cabello that that message came,—yellow fever—a short sickness—a burial in a stranger's grave. George Pelham's wife had been for two or three years of less than her usual strength. It was not long after that news came,—came so suddenly, with no warning,—that she began to fade away; and after ten months she died.

I remember seeing her a week or two before her death. Her bed had been set up in her little parlor for the convenience of those who were attending upon her. She lay on her back, bolstered up. The paleness of her face was intensified by her coal-black hair, lying back heavy on the pillow. Her hands were thin and transparent, and I remember well the straining look in her eyes as she talked with me about the boy whom she was going to leave.

She was living, as I have said, close by her father. It was natural that in the last few days of her illness the child should be taken to her father's house, and when she died and the funeral was over, it was there that he returned.

Picture now to yourself a boy toward nine years old, symmetrically made, firm and hard. His head is round, his features are good, his hair is fine and lies down close. He is clothed in a neat print jacket, with a collar and a little handkerchief at the neck, and a pair of short trousers buttoned on to the jacket. He is barefoot. He is tanned but not burnt. His complexion is of a rich dark brown. He is always fresh and clean. But the great charm about him is the expression of infinite fun and mirth that is always upon his face. Never for a moment while he is awake is his face still. Always the same, yet always shifting, with a thousand varying shades of roguish joy. Quick, bright, full of boyish repartee, full of shouts and laughter. And the same incessant life which plays upon his face shows itself in every movement of his limbs. Never for a moment is he

still unless he has some work upon his hands. He has his little routine of tasks, regularly assigned, which he goes through with the most amusing good-humor and attention. It is his duty to see that the skiffs are not jammed under the wharf on the rising tide; to sweep out the "Annie" when she comes in, and to set her cabin to rights; to set away the dishes after meals, and to feed the chickens. Aside from a few such tasks, his time in summer is his own. The rest of the year he goes to the "primary," and serves to keep the whole room in a state of mirth. He has the happy gift that to put every one in high spirits he has only to be present. Such an incessant flow of life you rarely see. His manners are good, and he comes honestly by them.

There is an amusing union in him of the baby and the man. While the children of his age at the summer hotel walk about for the most part with their nurses, he is turned loose upon the shore, and has been, from his cradle. He can dive and swim and paddle and float and "go steamboat." He can row a boat that is not too heavy, and up to the limit of his strength

he can steer a sail-boat with substantial skill. He knows the currents, the tides, and the shoals about his shore, and the nearer landmarks. He knows that to find the threadlike entrance to the bay you bring the flag-staff over Cartwright's barn. He has vague theories of his own as to the annual shifting of the channel. He knows where to take the city children to look for tinkle-shells and mussels. He knows what winds bring in the scallops from their beds. He knows where to dig for clams, and where to tread for quahaugs without disturbing the oysters. He has a good deal of fragmentary lore of the sea.

Every morning you will hear his cry, a sort of yodel, or bird-call, peculiar to him, with which he bursts forth upon the world. Then you will hear, perhaps, loud peals of laughter at something that has excited his sense of the absurd, — contagious laughter, full of innocent fun.

Then he will appear, perhaps, with his wooden dinner-bucket, — he is going off with his grandfather for the day, — and will yodel to the old man as a signal to make haste. Then you will hear him consulting with some one upon the weather.

All this time he will be going through various evolutions, swinging in the hammock, sitting on the fence, opening his bucket to show you what he has to eat, closing the bucket and sitting down upon the cover, or turning somersaults upon the grass. Then he will encamp under an apple-tree to wait until his grandfather appears, enlivening the time by a score of minute excursions after hens and cats. Then he will go into the house again, and rock while the old man finishes his coffee, sure of a greeting, confident in a sense of entire good-fellowship, until the meal is finished, and James Parsons is ready to take his coat and a red-bladed oar, and set out. Then the boy is like a setter off for a walk,— all sorts of whimsical expressions in his face, of absolute delight; every form of extravagance in his bearing. The only trouble is, one has to laugh too much; but with all this, something so manly, so companionable.

He is no little of a philosopher in his way. He has been a great deal with older people, and has caught the habit of discussion of affairs, or rather, perhaps, of unconsciously reflecting forth discussions which he has heard. He has an

infinite curiosity upon all matters of human life. He likes, within limits, to discuss character.

In the boat his chief delights are to talk, to eat cookies, and to steer. When it is not blowing too hard for him to stand at the tiller, he will steer for an hour together, watching with the most constant care the trembling of the leach.

It makes no difference to him at what hour he returns,—from oystering or from the cranberry-bog. If it is in the middle of the afternoon, good and well. Instantly upon landing he will collect a troop of urchins; in an incredibly short space of time there will be a heap of little clothes upon the bank; in a moment a procession of small naked figures will go running down to the wharf, diving, one after the other. If distance or tide or a calm keeps him out late, so much the better. In that case there is the romance of coasting along the shore by night; of counting and distinguishing the lights; of guessing the nearness to land from the dull roar of the sea breaking on the beach. “Don’t you think,” he will sometimes say, “that we are nearer shore than we think we are?”

It is amusing sometimes, on a distant voyage of fifteen or twenty miles, after seed oysters, when a landing is made at some little port, to see him drop the mariner at once and become a child, with a burning desire to find a shop where he can buy animal-crackers. Finding such a place,— and usually it is not difficult,— he will lay in a supply of lions and tigers, and then go marching about with great delight, with mockery in his eyes, keenly appreciating the satire involved in eating the head off a cooky lion, incapable of resistance.

No picture of Joe would be complete which left out his dog. Kit was a black, fine-haired creature, smaller than a collie, but of much the same gentle disposition,— a present from Captain Pelham. When Kit was first presented to the boy he domesticated himself at once, and in a week it was impossible to tell, from his relations with the household, which was boy and which was dog. They were both boys and they were both dogs. Kit had an unqualified sense of being at home, and of being beloved and indispensable. It was long before he became a

sailor. When, at the outset, it was attempted to make a man of him by taking him when they went out to fish, the failure seemed to be complete. He was a little sea-sick. Then he was sad, and sighed and groaned as dogs never do on shore. He would not lie still, but was nervous and feverish. Once he leaped out of the boat and made for shore, and had to be pursued and rescued, exhausted and half-drowned. Still, whenever he had to be left at home, it was a struggle every time to reconcile him and leave him. Once he pursued a boat which he mistook for James's along the shore of the bay, half down to Benson's Narrows, got involved in the creeks which the tide was beginning to fill, and had to be brought ingloriously home by a farmer, made fast on the top of a load of sweet, salt hay.

He would tease like a child to be allowed to go. He would listen with an unsatisfied and appealing look while Joe, with an exuberant but regretful air, explained to him in detail the reasons which made it impossible for him to go. But in a few months, as the dog grew older, he prevailed, and although he would generally re-

tire into the shelter of the cabin, he was nevertheless the boy's almost inseparable companion on the water as on the shore. The relation between the two was always touching. It evidently never crossed the dog's mind that he was not a younger brother.

Now, to complete the picture of James Parsons's household, add in this boy; for while it is but just now that he is strictly of it, he has been for years its mirth and life.

I remember that quiet household before it knew him,—cosey, homelike, with a pervading air even then of genial humor, but with long hours of silence and repose,—geraniums and the click of knitting-needles in the sitting-room; faint odors of a fragrant pipe from the shed kitchen; no stir of boisterous fun, except when some bronzed, solemn joker, with his wife, came in for a formal call, and solemnity gave way, by a gradual descent, to merriment. Joe had given no new departure, only an impulse. "James used to behave himself quite well," Mrs. Parsons would say, archly raising her eyebrows, "before Joe's time; but now there's two boys

of 'em together, and the one as bad as the other, and I can't do nothing with 'em. And then," — with a mock gesture of despair, — "that dog!"

IV.

WHILE Joe's mother was lying ill, and after it had become certain that she would soon leave this world forever, the question had been freely discussed as to what her boy's future should be. In Captain Joseph Pelham's mind there was only one answer to this question, — that the lad should come to him. He bore the Captain's name ; he represented the Captain's son ; he should take a place now in the Captain's home.

It was now about three weeks since Joe's mother had been buried. The stone had not yet been cut and set over her grave. But the Captain thought it time to drive over to James Parsons's and take the boy. That James would make any serious opposition perhaps never entered his mind. It was a bright, charming afternoon ; with his shining horse, in a bright, well-varnished buggy, the Captain drove over the seven miles of winding roads through the

woods, and along the sea, to the village where James Parsons lived. He tied his horse to the hitching-post in front of the broad cottage house, went down the path to the L door, knocked, and went in.

James was sitting in a large room which served in winter as a kitchen and in summer as a sort of sitting-room, smoking a pipe and gazing vacantly into the pine-branches in the open fireplace before him. He had been out all day on his marsh, but he had been home a couple of hours. His wife — kindly soul — received Captain Pelham at the door, wiping her hands upon her apron, and modestly showed him into the sitting-room; then she retired to her tasks in the shed kitchen. She moved about mechanically for a moment; then she ran hastily out into the lean-to wood-shed, shut the door behind her, sat down on the worn floor where it gives way with a step to the floor of earth by the wood-pile, hid her face in her apron, and burst into tears.

Joe was at the wharf with his comrades playing at war.

Now, if there ever was a hospitable man, — a

man who gave a welcome,—a rough but merry welcome to every one who entered his doors, it was James Parsons. He had a homely, jocose saying that you must either make yourself at home or go home. But on this occasion he rose with a somewhat forced and awkward air, laid his pipe down on the mantel-piece, and nodded to the Captain with an air of embarrassed inquiry. Then he bethought himself, and asked the Captain to sit down. The Captain took the nearest chair, beside the table, where Mrs. Parsons had lately been sitting at her work. James's chair was directly opposite. The table was between them.

James rose and went to the mantel-piece, scratched a match upon his boot-heel, and undertook to light his pipe. It did not light; he did not notice it, but put the pipe in his mouth as if it were lighted.

It occurred to Captain Pelham now, for the first time, absorbed as he had been with exclusive thoughts of the boy, that he should first say something to this old man about the daughter whom he had lost: and he made some expressions of sympathy. The old man nodded, but said nothing.

There was silence for two or three minutes.

The subject in order now was inevitably the boy. Captain Pelham opened his lips to claim him; but, almost to his own surprise, he found himself making some common remark about the affairs of the neighborhood. It came in harsh and forced, as if it were a fragment of conversation floated in by the breeze from the street outside. Then the Captain waited a moment, looking out of the window.

James took his pipe from his mouth and leaned his elbows on the table. "Why don't you go take him?" he suddenly said: "he's probably down to the wharf. If you have got the claim to him, why don't you go take him? You've got your team here,—drive right down there and put him in and drive off; if you've got the right to him, why don't you go take him? But ef you've come for my consent, you can set there till the chair rots beneath you."

With this, James rose and took the felt hat which was lying by him on the table, and saying not another word, went out of the door. He went down to the shore, and affected to busy himself with his boat.

There was nothing for Captain Pelham to do but to take his hat, untie his horse, and drive home.

The Captain well knew that nobody in the world had a legal right to the child until a guardian should be appointed. A plain and simple path was open before him: it was his only path. James Parsons had proved wilful and wrong-headed; there was nothing now but to take out letters as guardian of the boy. Then James would acquiesce without a word.

Immediately after breakfast the Captain went down the street. He opened his letters and attended to the first routine of business; then he went across the way and up a flight of stairs to a lawyer's office.

If you had happened to read the county papers at about this time, you would have seen among the legal notices two petitions, identical in form,—the one by Joseph Pelham, the other by James Parsons,—each applying for guardianship of Joseph Pelham, the younger of that name, with an order upon each petition for all persons interested to come in on the first

Tuesday of the following month and show cause why the petitioner's demand should not be granted.

The county court-house was a new brick building, of modest size, fifteen miles from W—, and twenty miles from the village where James Parsons lived.

There were fifteen or twenty people from different towns in attendance when the court opened on the important first Tuesday. As one after another transacted his affairs and went away, others would come in. Three or four lawyers sat at tables talking with clients, or stood about the judge's desk. There was a sprinkling of women in new mourning. Printed papers, filled out with names and dates,—petitions and bonds and executors' accounts,—were being handed in to the judge and receiving his signature of approval.

The routine business was transacted first. It was almost noon when the judge was at last free to attend to contested matters. There was a small audience by that time,—only ten or a dozen people, some of whom were waiting for

train-time, while others, who had come upon their own affairs, lingered now from curiosity.

The judge was a tall, spare, old-fashioned man; he had held the office for above thirty years. He was a man of much native force, of sound learning within the range of his judicial duties, and of strong common-sense. He was often employed by Captain Pelham in his own affairs, and more particularly in bank and insurance matters,—for the probate judges are free to practise at the bar in matters not connected with their judicial duties,—and Captain Pelham had always retained him in important cases as counsel for the town. He had a large practice throughout the county; he knew its people, their ideas, their traditions, and their feelings. He understood their social organization to the core.

“Now,” said the judge, laying aside some papers upon which he had been writing, and taking off his glasses, “we will take up the two petitions for guardianship of Joseph Pelham.”

Captain Pelham and the lawyer whom he had employed took seats at a small table before the judge; James Parsons timidly took a seat at

another. His petition had been filled out for him by one of his neighbors: he had no counsel.

Captain Pelham's lawyer rose; he had been impressed by the Captain with the importance of the matter, and he was about to make a formal opening. But the judge interrupted him. "I think," he said, "that we may assume that I know in a general way about these two petitioners. I shall assume, unless something is shown to the contrary, that they are both men of respectable character, and have proper homes for a boy to grow up in. And I suppose there is no controversy that Captain Pelham is a man of some considerable means, and that the other petitioner is a man of small property.

"Now," he went on, leaning forward with his elbow on his desk, and gently waving his glasses with his right hand, "did the father of this boy ever express any wish as to what should be done with him in case his mother should die?" Nobody answered. "It would be of no legal effect," he said, "but it would have weight with me. Now, is there any evidence as to what his mother wanted? A boy's mother can tell best about these things, if she is a sensible woman.

Mr. Baker," he said to Captain Pelham's lawyer, "have you any evidence as to what his mother wanted to have done with him?"

Mr. Baker conversed for a moment with Captain Pelham and then called him to the stand.

Captain Pelham testified as to his frequent visits to the boy's mother, and to her unbroken friendly relations with him. She had never said in so many words what she wanted to have done for the boy, but he always understood that she meant to have the child come to him; he could not say, however, that she had said anything expressly to that effect.

James sat before him not many feet away, in his old-fashioned broadcloth coat with a velvet collar. He cross-examined Captain Pelham a little.

"She did n't never tell you," he said, "that she was going to give you the boy, did she?"

"No, sir;" said Captain Pelham.

"How often did your wife come over to see her?"

"I could n't tell you, sir," said the Captain.

"Not very often, did she?"

"I think not," the Captain admitted.

"The boy's mother did n't never talk much about Mis' Captain Pelham, did she?"

"I don't remember that she did."

"She did n't never have her over to talk with her about what she was going to do with the boy, did she?"

"I don't know that she did," said the Captain.
"She is here; you can ask her."

"You did n't never hear of her leaving no word with Mis' Captain Pelham about taking care of the boy, did you?"

"I can't say that I did," said Captain Pelham.

The old man nodded his head with a satisfied air. His cross-examination was done.

The Captain retired from the witness-stand; his lawyer whispered with him a moment and then went over and whispered for two or three minutes with Mrs. Pelham; then he said he had no more evidence to offer.

"Mr. Parsons," said the judge, "do you wish to testify?"

James went to the witness-stand and was sworn.

"Did n't your daughter ever talk about what she wanted done with the boy?"

"Talk about it?" said James. "Why, she didn't talk about nothing else. She used to have it all over every time we went in. It was all about how mother 'n' me must do this with him and do that with him,— how he was to go to school, what room he was going to sleep in to our house, and all that."

Mr. Baker desired to make no cross-examination, and James's wife was called, and testified in her quaint way to the same effect.

By a keen, homely instinct James had half consciously foreseen what would be the controlling element of the case; and while he had not formulated it to himself he had brought with him one of his neighbors, who had watched with his daughter through the last nights of her life. She was one of the poorest women of the village. Her husband was shiftless, and was somewhat given to drink. She had a large family, with little to bring them up on. Her life had been one long struggle. She was extremely poorly dressed, and although she was neat, there was an air of unthrift or discouragement about her dress. She wore an oversack which evidently had originally been made for some one

else; it lacked one button. She was faded and worn and homely; but the moment she spoke she impressed you as a woman of conscience. She had talked in the long watches of the night with the boy's mother, and she confirmed what James and his wife had said. There could be no question what the mother had desired.

Mr. Baker ventured out upon the thin ice of cross-examination.

"She must have talked about her father-in-law, Captain Pelham?" he said.

"Oh, yes," said the woman, "often."

"She seemed to be attached to him?"

"Yes, indeed," said the woman, quickly; "she was always telling how good he was to her; I have heard her say there was n't no better man in the world."

"She must have talked about what he could do for the boy?"

"Yes," said the woman. "She expected him to do for Joe."

"Did n't she ever say," and the lawyer looked round at James, — "did n't you ever hear her say that she was worried sometimes for fear her father would not be careful enough about the boy?"

The woman hesitated a moment. "Yes," she said, "I have heard her say so, but that's what every mother says."

"What reason did you ever hear her give," the lawyer asked, "why she would rather have him stay over there than to go and be brought up by his grandfather Pelham?"

The woman looked around timidly at the judge. "Be I obliged to answer?" she said.

The judge nodded.

The woman looked toward Captain Pelham with an embarrassed air. He was the best friend she had in the world.

"I rather not say nothing about that," she said; "it's no account, anyway."

"Oh, tell us what she said," said Mr. Baker.

He felt that he had made some progress up to that point with his cross-examination.

"Well, it was n't much," said the woman; "it was only like this. I have heard her say that Mis' Captain Pelham was a good woman and meant to do what was right, but she was n't a woman that knew how to mother a little boy." And here the witness began to cry.

The judge moved slightly in his chair.

There was more or less rambling talk about the way the boy was allowed to run loose on the shore, and some suggestions were made in the way of conversational argument about his being allowed to go barefoot, and to go in swimming when he pleased; but the judge seemed to pay very little attention to that. "That's the way we were all brought up," he said. "It is good for the boy; he 'll learn to take care of himself, and his mother knew all about it.

"It is plain enough," he said at last, "that there would be some advantages to the boy in going to live with Captain Pelham; but there is one thing that has been overlooked which would probably have been suggested if the petitioner Parsons had had counsel. It has been assumed that the boy would be cut loose in future from his grandfather Pelham unless he was put under his guardianship; but that is n't so. All his grandparents will look out for him, and when he gets older, and wants to go into business, here or elsewhere, Captain Pelham will look after him just the same as if he were his guardian. The other grandfather has n't got the means to advance him. I am not at all afraid about that," he said;

"the only question here is, where he shall be deposited for the next five or six years. Either place is good enough. His father had a right to fix it by will if he had chosen to; but he did n't, and I think we must consider it a matter for the women to settle: they know best about such things. It is plain that his mother thought it would be best for him to stay where he is, and she knew best. He 's wonted there, and wants to stay."

Then he took up his pen and wrote on Captain Pelham's petition an order of dismissal. On the other he filled out and signed the decree granting guardianship to James Parsons, and approved the bond. Then he handed the papers to the register and called the next case.

From this day on, little was seen of Captain Pelham at James's house. Sometimes he would stop in his buggy and take the boy off with him for a little stay; but Joe soon wearied of formality, and grew restless for James, for his grandmother Parsons, for the free life of the little wharf and the shore. Life always opened fresh to him on his return.

Once and only once Captain Pelham entered James's door-yard. James was sitting in an arm-chair under an apple-tree by the well, smoking and reading the paper. The Captain began, this time, with no introduction.

"Fred Gooding," he said, "tells me you are talking of letting Joe go out with Pitts in his boat. You know Pitts is no fit man."

"You tell Fred Gooding he don't know what he's talking about," said James, as he rose from his chair, holding the paper in his hand. "What I told Pitts was just the contr'y,—the boy should n't go along o' him." Then his anger began to rise. "But what right you got," he demanded, "to interfere? 'T ain't none of your business who I let him go along of. It's me that's the boy's guardien."

"Very well," said the Captain. "Only I tell you fairly,—the first time I get word of anything, I'll go to the probate court and have you removed!"

James followed him down the path with derisive laughter. "Why don't you go to the probate court?" he said; "you hed great luck before!" And as the Captain drove away,

James shouted after him, "Go to the probate court! Go to the probate court!"

V.

THERE is a low, pleasant boat-shop, close on the shore of a little arm of the sea. The tide ebbs and flows before its wide double doors, and sometimes rises so high as to flow the sills; then you have to walk across in front of the shop on a plank, laid upon iron ballast. There is a little wharf or pier close at hand, the outer end of which is always going to be repaired. There are two or three other shops near by, and about them is the pleasant litter of a boat-yard. In the cove before them lie at their moorings in the late afternoon a fleet of fifteen or twenty fishing and pleasure boats, all cat-rigged, all of one general build, wide, shoal, with one broad sail, all painted white, by the custom of the place, and all or nearly all kept neat and clean: they are all likely enough to be called upon now and then for sailing-parties. Often of a bright afternoon in summer the sails will all be up, as the

boats swing at their floats: then you have all the effect of a regatta in still life.

The shop faces down the bay of which this inlet is the foot, and as you look out from your seat within, on a wooden stool, the great door frames in a landscape of peaceful beauty. The opening to the sea is closed to the view. Simply you can see the two white sand-cliffs through which it makes. The bay is a mile in length, perhaps, and of half that width. From its white, sandy shores rise gentle hills, bare to the sun or covered with a low growth of woods. To the right are low-lying pastures and marshes, with here and there a grazing cow. At the head of the bay the valley of a stream can be faintly distinguished, while in the distance there is a faint suggestion of a few scattered houses on the upper waters. At one or two points masts of boats rise from the grass of the inland, and sometimes a sail is seen threading its slow way amid the trees.

The shop is a favorite resort. You may go there in the early morning, in the late forenoon, or in the afternoon; whenever you go you will find there more or less company. There is a

sort of social, hospitable atmosphere about the place which is attractive in the extreme. Sometimes there is a good deal of conversation; sometimes there is a comfortable silence of good-fellowship. There is more or less knitting there and crocheting; often in the afternoon the women from near by take their work there to enjoy the view, and the fresh air which draws up there as nowhere else.

There is a good deal of religious discussion there, although the atmosphere of the shop is not entirely religious, as you may see by some of the papers lying about, and the cuts pasted up on the walls. Chief is a picture representing a scene in the life of the prophet Jonah. Jonah and the seamen are drawing lots to see who shall be cast over. Jonah has just drawn the ace of spades.

There are various other pictures on the walls, — prints of famous yachts, charts, advertisements of regattas, sailing rules of yacht-clubs. Nowhere is the science of boat-building and boat-sailing studied with greater closeness than in that shop. Many a successful racer has been built there. There are models of boats pinned

up against the wall,—models which to the common eye hardly vary at all, but to a trained perception differ widely. There are oars lying about the shop, oil-skin suits, a compass, charts, in round tin cases, boat hardware, and coils of new rope.

The little pier has its periods of activity and life, like the great world outside. At three or four o'clock, in the gray dawn, fishermen appear, singly, or two by two ; there is often then a failure of wind, and they have to get out to sea by heavy rowing or by the drift of the tide. Then there is silence for some hours, and when the world awakes the cove is nearly deserted. At seven o'clock begins the life of the shop. Amateur fishermen appear,—boarders from New York or visiting sons from Brockton. Later still, little parties come down,—a knot of young fellows and laughing girls with bright-colored wraps, bound on a sailing-party to Katameset, with a matron, and with some well-salted man to steer the boat, perhaps in slippers and a dressing-gown. They go singing out to sea. Then come a party of bathers,—ladies and little children, with towels and blue

suits, and all the paraphernalia of pails and wooden shovels. Then will come perhaps a couple of girls, to sketch. They will encamp anywhere upon the shore, call into their service some small amphibious creature to tip a skiff up on its side to make an effective scene, and proceed with the wonders of their art. Soon the bathers return. They have been only a little way down the narrows, and come back to dinner at one. The fishermen come in from three to four, unless they happen to be becalmed; there is a bustle then of getting out ice; of slitting and weighing and packing fish, and loading them into wagons to be carted to the railway. Then there is a lull until the sailing-parties return, perhaps at five, perhaps at six, perhaps not until the turn of the tide or the evening breeze brings them home.

All the time the quiet life of the boat-shop goes on,—its labor, its discussions on politics and religion, its criticism of yachts. All day long small boys play about the pier, race in skiffs or in such insignificant sailing-craft as may be available, and every half-hour, at the initiative of some infant leader, all doff

their little print waists and short trousers and "go in," regardless of the sketchers on the shore.

It was a bright, fresh day. The air was as clear as crystal. Joe had been gone since dawn with Henry Price. The wind had been blowing hard from the north for a dozen hours, and, as the saying is, had kicked up a sea. On the shoal the waves were rolling heavily, and since three o'clock the tide had been running against the wind, and the seas had been broken every way. But to Henry Price, and with that boat, rough seas, from March to November, were only what a rude mountain road would be to you or me. If his wife, toward afternoon, shading her eyes at the south door, ever felt anxious about him, it was a woman's foolish fear; it was only because she thought with concern of that — internal neuralgia was it? — which her husband brought back from the war; which seized him at rare intervals and enfeebled him for days. He made light of it, and never spoke of it out of the house. There was no better boatman on that shore. Let alone that one possibility of

weakness, and the ocean had a hard man to deal with when it dealt with him.

They had been gone all day. It had been rough, and they would come in wet. This wind would not die down; they were sure to make a quick run, and would be in before dark.

It was late in the afternoon. James was sitting in the shop with one or two companions, engaged in a loud discussion. He had been discoursing upon all his favorite themes. He had been declaiming upon the dangers from Catholic supremacy and the subserviency of the Irish vote to the Church of Rome, and upon the absolute necessity of the supremacy of the Democratic party; upon the Apocalypse and the seven seals. He had been maintaining the literal infallibility of the Scriptures, and the necessity of treating some portions as legendary. It would be hard to say what inconsistent views he had not set forth within the space of the past hour; and all this with the utmost intensity, and yet with the utmost good-humor, always ready to acknowledge a point against himself, — the more readily if entirely fallacious, — with a burst of hearty laughter.

At last there was a pause. Something had called out of doors the two or three men who were within. There was nothing to disturb the peaceful beauty of the afternoon. It was blowing hard outside, but this was a sheltered spot, and the wind was little felt.

As James sat there silent, with no one at hand but the owner of the shop, who was busy upon the keel of a new boat, a fisherman came in and took a seat, with an affectation of ease and nonchalance; in a moment another followed; two or three more came in, then others.

The carpenter stopped his work, and shading his eyes with his hand, seemed to be looking down the bay.

There was a dead silence for a few moments. Then James spoke. But it was not the voice of James. It was not that cheery and hearty voice which had just been filling the shop with mirth. It was a voice harsh, forced, mechanical,—the voice of a man paralyzed with terror.

“Why don’t you tell me?” he said; “is it Henry, or—is it the boy?”

But no one spoke.

“You don’t need to tell me nothing,” he said,

in the same strange tone of paralysis and fear, "I knowed it when Bassett first come in. I knowed it when the rest come in and closed in round me and did n't say nothing."

He sat still a moment. Then he rose abruptly and turned to the landward door. He stumbled over a stool which was in his way, and would have fallen but that one of the men sprang forward and held him. He plunged hastily out of the door. Just outside, in the shade of a small wild cherry-tree, was a bucket of clams which he had dug; across the bucket was an old hoe worn down to nothing. He stopped and mechanically took up the pail and hoe. Bassett stood by the door and looked after him as he went along the foot-path toward his home. There was a scantling fence close by. He went over it in his old habitual fashion: first he set over the bucket of clams and the hoe; then one leg went over and then the other; he sat for an instant on the top slat, and then slid down. He took up his burden and went his way over the fields. In a moment he was lost to sight behind a bit of rising ground. Then he reappeared, making his way

over the fields at his own heavy gait, until he was lost to sight behind a clump of trees close to his own door.

They did not find Henry and the boy that night. It was not until the next day that the bodies were washed ashore. One of the searchers, walking along the beach in the early dawn, found them both. He came upon Henry first; he was lying on the sand upon his face. A little farther on, gently swayed by the rising tide, lay Joe and his dog. Joe lay on his side, precisely as if asleep; the dog was in his arms.

The boy lies in the burying-ground on the hill, near the stone and the weeping-willow which mourn the youth who met his untimely death in 1830, in the launching of the brig. There is a rose-bush at the grave, and few bright days pass in summer that there is not a bunch of homely flowers laid at its foot. It is the spot to which all Mrs. Parsons's thoughts now tend, and her perpetual pilgrimage. It is too far for her to walk both there and back; but

often a neighbor is going that way, with a lug-wagon or an open cart or his family carriage, — it makes no difference which, — and it is easy to get a ride. It is a good-humored village. Everybody stands ready to do a favor, and nobody hesitates to ask one. Often on a bright afternoon Mrs. Parsons will watch from her front window the “teams” that pass, going to the bay. When she sees one which is likely to go in the right direction on its return from the bay, — everybody knows in which direction she will wish to go, — she will run hastily to the door, and hail it.

“Whoa! Sh-h! Whoa! How d’ do, Mis’ Parsons?”

“Be you going straight home when you come back? Well, then, if it won’t really be no trouble at all, I’ll be at the gap when you come by; I won’t keep you waiting a minute. It’s such a nice, sunshiny afternoon, I thought I’d like to go up and sit awhile, and take some posies.”



IN MADEIRA PLACE.

TURNING from the street which follows the line of the wharves, into Madeira Place, you leave at once an open region of docks and spars for comparative retirement. Wagons seldom enter Madeira Place: it is too hard to turn them in it; and then the inhabitants, for the most part, have a convenient way of buying their coal by the basket. How much trouble it would save, if we would all buy our coal by the basket!

A few doors up the place a passageway makes off to the right, through a high wooden gate that is usually open; and at the upper corner of this passage stands a brick house, whose perpetually closed blinds suggest the owner's absence. But the householders of Madeira Place do not absent themselves, even in summer; they could hardly get much nearer to the sea. And

if you will take the pains to seat yourself, toward the close of day, upon an opposite door-step, between two rows of clamorous little girls sliding, with screams of painful joy, down the rough hammered stone, to the improvement of their clothing, you will see that the house is by no means untenanted.

Every evening it is much the same thing. First, following close upon the heels of sunset, comes a grizzly, tall, and slouching man, in the cap and blouse of a Union soldier, bearing down with his left hand upon a cane, and dragging his left foot heavily behind him, while with his right hand he holds by a string a cluster of soaring toy balloons, and also drags, by its long wooden tongue, a rude child's cart, in which is a small hand-organ.

Next will come, most likely, a dark, bent, keen-eyed old woman, with her parchment face shrunk into deep wrinkles. She bears a dangling placard, stating, in letters of white upon a patent-leather background, what you might not otherwise suspect, — that she was a soldier under the great Napoleon, and fought with him at Waterloo. She also bears, since music goes

with war, a worn accordion. She is the old woman to whose shrivelled, expectant countenance you sometimes offer up a copper coin, as she kneels by the flagged crossway path of the Park.

She is succeeded, perhaps, by a couple of black-haired, short, broad-shouldered men, leading a waddling, unconcerned bear, and talking earnestly together in a language which you will hardly follow.

Then you will see six or eight or ten other sons and daughters of toil, most of them with balloons.

All these people will turn, between the high, ball-topped gate-posts, into the alley, and descend at once to the left, by a flight of three or four steps, to a side basement door.

As they begin to flock in, you will see through the alley gate a dark, thick-set man, of middle age, but with very little hair, come and stand at the foot of the steps, in the doorway. It is Sorel, the master of the house; for this is the *Maison Sorel*. Some of his guests he greets with a Noachian deluge of swift French words and high-pitched cries of welcome. It is thus

that he receives those capitalists, the bear-leaders from the Pyrenees ; it is thus that he greets the grizzled man in the blue cap and blouse,—Fidèle the old soldier, Fidèle the pensioner, to whom a great government, far away, at Washington, doubtless with much else on its mind, never forgets to send by mail, each quarter-day morning, a special, personal communication, marked with Fidèle's own name, enclosing the preliminaries of a remittance: “Accept” (as it were) “this slight tribute.” “Ah ! que c'est un gouvernement ! Voilà une république !”

Even a Frenchman may be proud to be an American !

Most of his guests, however, Sorel receives with a mere pantomime of wide-opened eyes and extended hands and shrugged-up shoulders, accompanied by a long-drawn “*Eh !*” by which he bodies forth a thousand refinements of thought which language would fail to express. Does a fresh immigrant from the Cévennes bring back at night but one or two of the gay balloons with which she was stocked in the morning, or, better, none ; or, on the other hand, does a stalwart

man just from the rich Brie country return at sundown in abject despair, bringing back almost all of the red and blue globes which floated like a radiant constellation of hope about his head when he set forth in the early morning, Sorel can express, by his "*Eh!*" and some slight movement, with subtle exactness and with no possibility of being misapprehended, the precise shade of feeling with which the result inspires him.

But there he stops. Nothing is said. Sorel is a philosopher: he has indicated volumes, and he will not dilute with language. One who has fired a little lead bullet does not need to throw after it a bushel of mustard-seed.

The company, as they come in, one by one, wash their hands and faces, if they see fit, at the kitchen sink, and dry them on a long roller-towel,—a device adopted, probably, from the Americans. Then they retire to the room behind the kitchen, and seat themselves at a long table, at which the bear-leaders place themselves only after seeing their animal fed, in the coal-hole, where he is quartered.

At the supper-table all is joy, even with the

hopeless. Fidèle beams with good-humor, and not infrequently is called on to describe, amid a general hush, for the benefit of some new-comer from "*la belle France*," the quarterly receipt of the communication from Washington: how he stays at home that day, and shaves, and waits at the door for "*la poste*;" how the gray-uniformed letter-carrier appears, hands out a letter "as large as that," and nods smilingly to Fidèle: he, too, fought at "*la Montagne du Lookout*." The amount of the sergeant's pension astonishes them, wonted as they are to the pecuniary treatment of soldiers in the Old World. "*Mais*, it is a fortune! Fidèle is a *vrai rentier*! Ah! *une république comme ça !*"

Generally, however, Fidèle contents himself at the evening meal with smiling good-humoredly on everybody and rapidly passing in, under his drooping mustache, spoonfuls of soup, morsels from the long French loaf, and draughts of lager beer; for only the rich can have wine in this country, and in the matter of drink an exile must needs lower his standard, as the prodigal lowered his.

While Sorel and his wife and their busy maid

fly in and out with *potage* and *rôti*, “*t-r-r-rès succulent*,” the history of which we must not pry too deeply into, there is much excited conversation. You see at once that many amusing things happen to one who sells balloons all day upon the Park. And there are varied fortunes to recount. Such a lady actually wished to buy three for fifty cents! Such a “police-ermann” is to be highly commended; such another looks with an evil eye upon all: he should truly be removed from office. There is a rumor that a license fee is to be required by the city.

All this is food for discussion.

After supper they all sit about the kitchen or in the alley-way, chatting, smoking. She who has been lucky in her sales basks in Sorel’s favor. The unfortunate peasant from the Brie country feels the little bullet in his heart, and nurses a desperate resolution to redeem himself on the morrow: one must live.

Sometimes, if you happen to pass there on a warm evening, you may see a young woman, rather handsome, sitting sidewise on the outer basement steps, looking absently before her,

straight-backed, upright, with her hands clasped about one knee, with her skirt sweeping away: a picture of Alsace. I have never been able to find out who she is.

One evening there is a little flutter among this brood. A gentleman, at the alley door, wishes to see M. Sorel. M. Sorel leads the gentleman out, through the alley gate, to the front street-door; then, retiring whence he came, he shortly appears from within at the front door, which opens only after a struggle. A knot of small boys has instantly gathered, apparently impressed with a vague, awful expectation that the gentleman about to enter will never come out. Realizing, however, that in that case there will be nothing to see, they slowly disperse when the door is closed, and resume their play.

Sorel ushers the gentleman into the front parlor, which is Sorel's bedroom, which is also the storehouse of his merchandise, which is also the nursery. At this moment an infant is sleeping in a trundle-bed.

The gentleman takes a chair. So does Sorel.

The gentleman does not talk French. Fortunately, M. Sorel can speak the English: he has learned it in making purchases for his table.

"I am an officer of the government," says Mr. Fox, with a very sharp, distinct utterance, "in the custom-house. You know 'custom-house'?"

M. Sorel does not commit himself. He is an importer of toys. One must be on his guard.

Thereupon, a complicated explanation: this street, and that street, and the other street, and this building, and the market, and the great building standing here.

Ah! yes! M. Sorel identifies the building. Then he is informed that many government officers are there. He knew it very well before.

The conversation goes a step farther.

Mr. Fox is one of those officers. The government is at present in need of a gentleman absolutely trustworthy, for certain important duties: perhaps to judge of silks; perhaps to oversee the weighing of sugar, of iron, of diamonds; perhaps to taste of wines. Who can say what service this great government may not need from its children!

With some labor, since the English is only a translucent, and not a transparent medium to Sorel, this is made clear. Still the horizon is dark.

Mr. Fox draws his chair nearer, facing Sorel, who looks uneasy: Sorel's feelings, to the thousandth degree of subdivision, are always declaring themselves in swift succession upon his face.

Mr. Fox proceeds.

The great officer of the custom-house, the collector —

“*Le chef?*” interrupts Sorel.

—yes, the *chef* (Mr. Fox seizes upon the word and clings to it), — the *chef* has been speaking anxiously to Mr. Fox about this vacancy: Mr. Fox is in the *chef's* confidence.

“Ah!” from Sorel, in a tone of utter bewilderment.

“We must have,” the *chef* had said to Mr. Fox, — “we must have for this place a noble man, a man with a large heart” (the exact required dimensions Mr. Fox does not give); “a man who loves his government, a man who has showed himself ready to die for her; we must

have" — here Mr. Fox bends forward and lays his hand upon Sorel's knee, and looks him in the eye, — "we must have — *a soldier!*"

"Ah!" says Sorel, moving his chair back a little, unconsciously, "*il faut un soldat!* I un-stan', — *le chef*, 'e boun' to 'ave one sol'ier!"

Still no comprehension of the stranger's object.

Curiosity, however, prompts Sorel at this point to an inquiry: "'Ow much 'e goin' pay 'im?"

Mr. Fox suggests that he guess. M. Sorel guesses, boldly, and high, — almost insolently high, — eight dollars a week: she is so generous, *la République!*

Higher!

"Higher!" Sorel's eyes open. He guesses again, and recklessly: "*Dix dollars par semaine*; you know — ten dol-lar every week."

Try again, — again, — again! He guesses, — madly now, as one risks his gold at Baden: twelve, fourteen, sixteen, eighteen.

Yes, eighteen dollars a week, and more — a thousand dollars every year.

Sorel wipes his brow. A thousand dollars in one year! It is like a temptation of the devil.

Sorel ventures another inquiry. The *chef* of

the custom'-ouse, esteeming the old sol'iers so highly, is an old sol'ier himself,—is it not so? He has fought for his country? Doubtless he has lost an arm. And Sorel instinctively lets his right arm hang limp, as if the sleeve were empty.

No; the *chef* was an editor and a statesman in the time of the war. He had greatly desired to go to fight, but his duties did not permit it. Still, he loves the old soldier.

Another advance in the conversation, this time by Mr. Fox.

The government, it seems, has now awakened, with deep distress, to the fact that one class of her soldiers she has hitherto forgotten. The government — that is, the *chef* of the custom-house — had this very morning said to Mr. Fox that this class of old soldiers must be brought forward, for trust and for honor. “We must choose, for this vacant place,” the *chef* had said, — here Mr. Fox brings his face forward in close proximity to Sorel’s astonished countenance, — “we must have, not only an old soldier, but — *a Frenchman!*”

“Ah!”

"Such a soldier lives here," says Mr. Fox; "is it not true? So brave, so honest, so modest, so faithful! Ready to die for his country; worthy of trust and worthy of reward!"

"*Mais!*"* with amazement. Yes, such a soldier lives here. But can it be that monsieur refers to our Fidèle?

Precisely so!

Whereupon Sorel, hard, hairless, but French, weeps, and embraces Mr. Fox as the representative of the great government at Washington; and, weeping and laughing, leads him downstairs and presents him to Fidèle and to the bear-leaders, and opens a bottle of weak vinegar.

Such an ovation as Fidèle receives! And such a generous government! To send a special messenger to seek out the old sergeant in his retirement! So thoughtful! But it is all of a piece with its unfailing care in the past.

Fidèle begins, on the spot, to resume something of his former erectness and soldierly bearing; to shake off the stoop and slouch which lameness and the drawing about of his "mu-

sique" have given him. He wishes to tell the story of Lookout Mountain.

As Mr. Fox is about to go, he recollects himself. Oh, by the way, one thing more. It is not pleasant to mingle sadness with rejoicing. But Mr. Fox is the reluctant bearer of a gentle reproach from the great government at Washington. Her French children,—are they not just a little remiss? And when she is so bountiful, so thoughtful!

"*Mais* — how you mean?" (with surprise.)

Why,—and there is a certain pathos in Mr. Fox's tone, as he stands facing Sorel, with the gaze of a loving, reproachful friend,—why, how many of the Frenchmen of this quarter are ever seen now at the pleasant gatherings of the Republicans, in the wardroom? The Republic, the Republicans,—it is all one. Is that quite kind to the Republic? Should not her French children, on their part, show filial devotion to the fond government?

"*Mais*," M. Sorel swiftly explains, "they are weary of going; they understand nothing. One sits and smokes a little while, and one talks; then one puts a little ticket into one's

hand; one is jammed into a long file; one slips his ticket into a box; he knows not for whom he is voting; it is like a flock of sheep. What is the use of going?"

Ah! that is the trouble? Then they are unjustly reproached. The government has indeed neglected to guide them. But suppose that some officer of the government—Mr. Fox himself, for instance—will be at the meeting? Then can M. Sorel induce those good French citizens to come?

Induce them! They will be only too ready; in fact, at a word from M. Sorel, and particularly when the news of this great honor to Fidèle shall have spread abroad, twenty, thirty, forty will go to every meeting,—that is, if a friend be there to guide them. At the very next meeting, *monsieur* shall see whether the great government's French children are neglectful!

Whereupon the great government, in the person of Mr. Fox, then and there falls in spirit upon the neck of her French citizen-children, represented by Sorel and Fidèle, and full reconciliation is made.

Yes, Mr. Fox will come again. M. Sorel must introduce him to those brave Frenchmen, his friends and neighbors; Mr. Fox must grasp them by the hand, one by one. Sorel must take him to the *Société des Franco-Américains*, where they gather. The government wishes to know them better. And (this in a confidential whisper) there may be other places to be filled. What! Suppose, now, that the government should some day demand the services of M. Sorel himself in the custom-house; and, since he is a business man, at a still larger salary than a thousand dollars a year!

“Ah, *monsieur*” (in a tone of playful reproach), “*vous êtes un flatteur, n'est ce pas?* You know,—I guess you giv'n' me taffy.”

Such a hero as Fidèle is! No more balloons, no more carting about of “*ma musique*:” a square room upstairs, a bottle of wine at dinner, short hours, distinction,—in fine, all that the heart can wish.

I have been speaking in the present: I should have spoken in the past.

It was shortly after Fidèle's appointment — in the early autumn — that I first made his and Sorel's acquaintance.

I was teaching in an evening school, not far from Madeira Place, and among my scholars was Sorel's only son, a boy of perhaps fourteen, whom his father had left behind, for a time, at school in France, and had but lately brought over. He was a shy, modest, intelligent little fellow, utterly out of place in his rude surroundings. From the pleasant village home-school, of which he sometimes told me, to the *Maison Sorel*, was a grating change.

He was always waiting for me at the school-room door, and was always the last one to speak to me at closing. Perhaps I reminded him of some young usher whom he had known when life was more pleasant.

If, however, the *Maison Sorel* chafed Auguste, it was not for lack of affection on his father's part. Sorel often came with him to the door of the school-room; and every night, rain or shine, he was there at nine to accompany him home. It was in this way that I first came to know Sorel; and whether it was from

some kindness that Auguste may have thought I showed, or because I could talk a little French, Sorel took a great liking to me. At first, he and Auguste would walk with me a few blocks after school; then he would look in upon me for a few minutes at the law-office where I was studying, where I had a large anteroom to myself; finally, nothing would do but that I should visit him at his house. I had always been fond of strolling about the wharves, and I should have liked very well to stop occasionally at Sorel's, if I could have been allowed to sit in the kitchen and hear the general conversation. But this was not sufficient state for "*M. le maître d'école.*" I must be drawn off upstairs to the bedroom parlor, to hear of Auguste's virtues. Such devotion I have seldom seen. Sorel would have praised Auguste, with tears in his eyes, for hours together, if I would have stayed to listen.

He had many things to show in that parlor. He had gyroscopes: and he would wind them up and set half-a-dozen of those anti-natural tops spinning straight out in the air for my diversion. There were great sacks of uninflated

balloons, and delicate sheet-rubber, from which Sorel made up balloons. There were other curious things in rubber,—a tobacco-pouch, for example, in perfect outward imitation of an iron kilogramme-weight, with a ring to lift it by, warranted to create “immense surprise” among those who should lift it for iron; tobacco-pouches, too, in fac-simile of lobsters and crabs and reptiles, colored to nature, which Sorel assured me would cause roars of laughter among my friends: there was no pleasanter way, he said, of entertaining an evening company than suddenly to display one of these creatures, and make the ladies scream and run about. He presented me, at different times, with a gyroscope, a kilogramme-weight, and a lobster with a blue silk lining.

As time ran on, and, in the early winter, I began practice, Sorel brought me a little business. He had to sue two Græco-Roman wrestlers for board and attach their box-office receipts. Some Frenchman had heard of a little legacy left him in the Calvados, and wanted me to look up the matter.

Fidèle, too, came to me every quarter-day, to

make oath before me to his pension certificate, and stopped and made a short call. He had little to say about France. His great romance had been the war, although it seemed to have fused itself into a hazy, high-colored dream of danger, excitement, suffering, and generous devotion. Tears always rose in his eyes when he spoke of "*la république*."

In those first days of practice, anything by the name of law business wore a halo, and I used to encourage Sorel's calls, partly for this reason and partly for practice in talking French with a common man. I hoped to go to France some day, and I wanted to be able then to talk not only with the grammatical, but with the dear people who say, "I guess likely," and "How be you?" in French.

Moreover, Sorel was rather amusing. He was something of a humorist. Once he came to tell me, excitedly, that Auguste was learning music: "*Il touche au violon, — mais — 'e play so bien !*" And Sorel's eyes opened in wonder at the boy's quickness.

"Who teaches him?" I asked. "Some Frenchman who plays in the theatre?"

“*Mais, no,*” Sorel replied, with a broad drollery in his eye; “*un professeur d'occasion !*” It was a ruined music-teacher, engaged now in selling balloons from Madeira Place, who was the “*professeur d'occasion.*”

One day Sorel appeared with a great story to tell. Auguste, it seemed, had wearied of home, and was determined to go to sea. Nothing could deter him. Whereupon M. Sorel had hit upon a stratagem. He had hunted up, somewhere along the wharves, two French sailors with conversational powers, and had retained them to stay at his house for two or three days, as chance comers. It was inevitable that Auguste should ply them with eager questions,—and they knew their part.

As Sorel, entering into the situation now with all his dramatic nature, with his eyes wide open, repeated to me some of the tales of horror which they had palmed off upon innocent Auguste as spontaneous truth, I could see, myself, the rigging covered with ice an inch thick; sailors climbing up (“*Ah ! comme ils grimpent, — ils grimpent !*”) bare-handed, their hands freezing to the ropes at every touch, and

leaving flesh behind, “*comme* if you put your tongue to a lam’post in the winter.” I could see the seamen’s backs cut up with lashes for the slightest offences; I tasted the foul, unwholesome food. I think that Sorel half believed it all himself,—his imagination was so powerful,—forgetting that he had paid in silver coin for every word of it. At any rate, the ruse had been successful. Auguste had been thoroughly scared and had consented to stay at home, and the most threatening cloud of Sorel’s life had blown over.

Usually, however, Sorel and I talked politics; and to our common pleasure we generally agreed. Sorel knew very little about the details of our government, and he would listen to me with the utmost eagerness while I practised my French upon him, explaining to his wondering mind the relations of the States to each other and to the general government, and the system of State and Federal courts. He was very quick, and he took in the ingenious scheme with great facility. Then he would tell me about the workings of government in the French villages and departments; and as he read French

papers, he had always something in the way of news or explanation of recent events. I have since come to believe that he was exceedingly well informed.

The most singular thing about him to me was how he could cherish on the one hand such devotion as he plainly did, to France, and on the other hand such a passionate attachment to the United States. In truth, that double patriotism is one of the characteristic features of our country.

I could lead him, in twenty minutes, through the whole gamut of emotion, by talking about Auguste, and then of politics. It was irresistible, the temptation to lead him out. A word about Auguste, and he would wipe tears from his eyes. A mention of Gambetta, and the bare idea filled him with enthusiasm; he was instantly, in imagination, one of a surging crowd, throwing his hat in the air, or drawing Gambetta's carriage through the streets of Paris. I had only to speak of Alsace to bring him to a mood of sullen ugliness and hatred. He was, I have no doubt, a pretty good-tempered man; he was certainly warm-hearted;

his apparent harshness to his balloon-venders was probably nothing more than necessary parental severity, and he was always ready to recognize their successes. But I have never seen a more wicked and desperate expression than an allusion to Alsace called up in his face and in his whole bearing. Sometimes he would laugh, when I mentioned the severed province; but it was with a hard, metallic, cruel laugh. He felt the loss as he would have felt the loss of a limb. The first time I brought up the topic, I saw the whole bitter story of the dismembering of France.

There was another subject which called out that same bitter revengeful look, and that cruel nasal laugh,—the royalist factions and the Bonapartists. When we spoke of them, and I watched his face and heard his soulless laughter, I saw the French Revolution.

But he could always be brought back to open childish delight and warmth by a reference to the United States. Our government, in his eyes, embodied all that was good. France was now a "*république*," to be sure, and he rejoiced in the fact; but he plainly felt the power and

settled stability of our republic, and he seemed to have a filial devotion toward it closely akin to his love for Auguste.

How fortunate we were! Here were no *Légitimistes*, no *Orléanistes*, no *Bonapartistes*, for a perpetual menace! Here all citizens, however else their views might differ, believed, at least, in the republic, and desired to stay her hands. There were no factions here continually plotting in the darkness. Here the machinery of government was all in view, and open to discussion and improvement. Ah, what a proud, happy country is this! “*Que c'est une république!*”

I gathered enthusiasm myself from this stranger's ardor for the country of his adoption. I think that I appreciated better, through him, the free openness of our institutions. It is of great advantage to meet an intense man, of associations different from your own, who, by his very intensity and narrowness, instantly puts you at his standpoint. I viewed the United States from the shores of a sister republic which has to contend against strong and organized political forces not fully recognized in the laws,

working beneath the surface, which nevertheless are facts.

One acquaintance leads to another. Through Sorel, whose house was the final resort of Frenchmen in distress, and their asylum if they were helpless, not only Fidèle, but a number of other Frenchmen of that neighborhood, began to come to me with their small affairs. I was the *avocat* who "speak French." I am afraid that they were surprised at my "French" when they heard it.

There was a willow-worker from the Pas-de-Calais, a deformed man, walking high and low, and always wanting to rise from his chair and lay his hand upon my shoulder, as he talked, who came to consult me about the recovery of a hundred francs which he had advanced at *Anvers* to a Belgian tailor upon the pledge of a sewing-machine, on consideration that the tailor, who was to come in a different steamer, should take charge of the willow-worker's dog on the voyage: the willow-worker had a wife and six children to look after. This was a lofty contest; but I had time then. I found a little

amusement in the case, and I had the advantage of two or three hours in all of practical French conversation with men thoroughly in earnest. Finally, I had the satisfaction of settling their dispute, and so keeping them from a quarrel.

Then there was a French cook, out of a job, who wanted me to find him a place. He was gathering mushrooms, meanwhile, for the hotels. One day he surprised me by coming into my office in a white linen cap, brandishing in his hand a long, gleaming knife. He only desired, however, to tell me that he had found a place at one of the clubs, and to show, in his pride, the shining blade which he had just bought as his equipment.

But the man who impressed me most, after Sorel, was Carron. He first appeared as the friend of the cook,—whom he introduced to me, with many flourishes and compliments, although he was an utter stranger himself. Carron was a well-built and rather handsome man, of medium height, and was then perhaps fifty years of age. He had a remarkably bright, intelligent face, curling brown hair, and a full, wavy brown

beard. He kept a rival boarding-house, not far from Sorel's, in a gabled wooden house two hundred years old, which was anciently the home of an eminent Puritan divine. In the oak-panelled room where the theologian wrote his famous tract upon the Carpenter who Profanely undertook to Dispense the Word in the way of Public Ministration, and was Divinely struck Dumb in consequence, Carron now sold beer from a keg.

It was plain at a glance that his present was not of a piece with his past. I could not place him. His manners were easy and agreeable, and yet he was not a gentleman. He was well informed, and evidently of some mental training, and yet he was not quite an educated man. After his first visit to me, with the cook, he, too, occasionally looked in upon me, generally late in the afternoon, when I could call the day's work done and could talk French for half an hour with him, in place of taking a walk. He was strongly dramatic, like Sorel, but in a different way. Sorel was intense; Carron was *théâtral*. He was very fond of declamation; and seeing from the first my wish to learn

French,—which Sorel would never very definitely recognize,—he often recited to me, for ear practice, and in an exceedingly effective way, passages from the Old Testament. He seemed to know the Psalms by heart. He was a good deal of an actor, and he took the part of a Hebrew prophet with great effect. But his fervor was all stage fire, and he would turn in an instant from a denunciatory Psalm to a humorous story. Even his stories were of a religious cast, like those which ministers relate when they gather socially. He told me once about a priest who was strolling along the bank of the Loire, when a drunken sailor accosted him and reviled him as a lazy good-for-nothing, a *faineant*, and slapped his face. The priest only turned the other cheek to him. "Strike again," he said; and the sailor struck. "Now, my friend," said the priest, "the Scripture tells us that when one strikes us we are to turn the other cheek. There it ends its instruction and leaves us to follow our own judgment." Whereupon, being a powerful man, he collared the sailor and plunged him into the water.

He told me, too, with great unction, and with

a roguish gleam in his eye, a story of a small child who was directed to prepare herself for confession, and, being given a manual for self-examination, found the wrong places, and appeared with this array of sins: "I have been unfaithful to my marriage vows. . . . I have not made the tour of my diocese."

Carron had an Irish wife (*une Irlandaise*), much younger than he, whom he worshipped. He told me, one day, about his courtship. When he first met her, she knew not a word of French, and he not a word of English. He was greatly captivated (*épris*), and he had to contrive some mode of communication. They were both Catholics. He had a prayer-book with Latin and French in parallel columns; she had a similar prayer-book but in Latin and English. They would seat themselves; Carron would find in his prayer-book a sentence in French which would suit his turn, on a pinch, and through the medium of the Latin would find the corresponding passage in English in Norah's prayer-book and point it out to her. Norah, in her turn, would select and point out some passage in English which would

serve as a tribute to Carron's charms, and he would discover in his prayer-book, in French, what that tribute was. Why should we deem the dead languages no longer a practical study, when Latin can gain for a Frenchman an Irish wife!

Carron, as I have said, puzzled me. He had not the pensive air of one who has seen better days. He was more than cheerful in his present life: he was full of spirits; and yet it was plain that he had been brought up for something different. I asked him once to tell me, for French lessons, the story of his life. With the most charming complaisance, he at once consented; but he proceeded in such endless detail, the first time, in an account of his early boyhood in a strict Benedictine monastery school, in the south of France, as to suggest that he was talking against time. And although his spirited and amusing picture of his childhood days only awakened my curiosity, I could never persuade him to resume the history. It was always "the next time."

He seemed to be poor: but he never asked a favor except for others. On the contrary,

he brought me some little business. A *Belge* had been cheated out of five hundred dollars; I recovered half of it for him. A Frenchman from *le Midi* had bought out a little business, and the seller had immediately set up shop next door; I succeeded in shutting up the rival. I was a prodigy.

After a time I was told something further as to Carron's life. He had been a Capuchin monk, in a monastery at or near Paris. The instant that I heard this statement, I felt in my very soul that it was true. My eye had always missed something in Carron. I now knew exactly what it was,—a shaved crown, bare feet, and a cowl.

It was the usage for the brethren of his order to go about Paris barefoot, begging. They were not permitted by the *concierges* to go into the great apartment hotels. But "Carron, *il est très fin*," said my informant; "you know, —'e is var' smart." Carron would learn, by careful inquiry, the name of a resident on an upper floor; then he would appear at the *concierge's* door, and would mention the name of this resident with such adroit, demure, and absolute

confidence that he would be permitted at once to ascend. Once inside, he would go the rounds of the apartments. So he would get five times as much in a day as any of his fellows. A certain amount of the receipts he would yield up to the treasury of the monastery; the rest he kept for himself. After a while this came to be suspected, and he quietly withdrew to a new country.

There was not the slightest tangible corroboration of this story. It might have been the merest gossip or the invention of an enemy. But it fitted Carron so perfectly, that from the day I heard it I could never, somehow, question its substantial truth. If I had questioned it, I should have repeated the story to him, to give him an opportunity to answer. But something warned me not to do so.

Fidèle held on well at the custom-house, and I think that he became a general favorite. No one who took the old soldier by the hand and looked him in the eye could question his absolute honesty; and as for skill in his duties,—well, it was the custom-house.

But he was not saving much money. He was free to give and free to lend to his fellow-countrymen; and, moreover, various ways were pointed out to him by Mr. Fox, from time to time, in which an old soldier, delighting to aid his country, could serve her pecuniarily. The republic, — that is, the Republicans, — it was all one.

One afternoon, late in summer, Fidèle appeared at my office. He seldom visited me, except quarterly for his pension affidavit. As he came in now, I saw that something had happened. His grisly face wore the same kindly smile that it had always borne, but the light had gone out of it. His story was short. He had lost his place. He had been notified that his services would not be needed after Saturday. No reason had been given him; he was simply dismissed in humiliation. There must be some misunderstanding, such as occurs between the warmest friends. And was not the great government his friend? Did it not send him his pension regularly? Had it not sent a special messenger to seek him out, in his obscurity, for this position; and was he not far better suited to it now than at the outset?

In reply to questions from me, he told me more about Mr. Fox's first visit than I had hitherto known. I asked him, in a casual way, about the ward-meetings, and whether the French citizens generally attended them. No, they had been dropping off; they had become envious, perhaps, of him; they had formed a club, with Carron for president, and had voted to act in a body (*en solidarité*).

Then I told Fidèle that I knew no way to help him, and that I feared his dismission was final. He could not understand me, but went away, leaning on his cane, dragging his left foot sidewise behind him, with something of the air of an old faithful officer who has been deprived of his sword.

He had not been gone more than an hour, when the door opened again, and Carron looked in. Seeing that I was alone, he closed the door and walked very slowly toward my desk,—erect, demure, impassive, looking straight forward and not at me, with an air as if he were bearing a candle in high mass, intoning, as he came, a passage from the Psalms: “*Je me réjouirai; je partagerai Sichem, et je mesurerai la*

vallée de Succoth. Galaad sera à moi, Manassé sera à moi. . . . Moab sera le bassin où je me laverai, et je jetterai mon soulier sur Édom. . . . Qui est-ce qui me conduira dans la ville forte? Qui est-ce qui me conduira jusqu'en Édom?" (I will rejoice; I will divide Shechem and mete out the valley of Succoth. Gilead is mine; Manasseh is mine. . . . Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe. . . . Who will bring me into the strong city? Who will lead me into Edom?)

Carron propounded the closing inquiry with great unction; his manner expressed entire confidence that some one would be found to lead him into the strong city, to lead him into Edom.

I had lost something of my interest in Carron since I had heard the story of his Parisian exploits; but I could not help being amused at his manner. It portended something. He made no disclosure, however. Whatever he had to tell, he went away without telling it, contenting himself for the present with intimating by his triumphal manner that great good fortune was in the air.

On Saturday afternoon, as I was about closing my desk,—a little earlier than usual, for it was a most tempting late September day, and the waves of the harbor, which I could just see from my office window, called loudly to me,—Sorel appeared. I held out my hand, but he affected not to see it, and he sat down without a word. He was plainly disturbed and somewhat excited.

Of course I knew that it was his old friend's misfortune which weighed upon him; he was proud and fond of Fidèle.

I seated myself, and waited for him to speak. In a moment he began, with a low, hard laugh: “*Sembla que notre bon Fidèle a sa démission*: you know,—our Fidèle got bounced!”

Yes, I said, Fidèle had told me so, and I was very sorry to hear it.

“*Evidemment*” (this in a tone of irony) “*il faut un homme plus juste, plus loyale, que le pauvre Fidèle!* You know,—they got to 'ave one more honester man! *Bien!* You know who goin' 'ave 'is place?”

I shook my head.

Sorel laid down his hat, and wiped his brow

with his handkerchief. Then he went on, no longer speaking in French and then translating, — his usual concession to my supposed desires, — but mostly now in quasi-English: “*Mais, you* thing this great *gouvernement* wan’ hones’ men work for her, *n'est-ce pas?*”

“The government ought to have the most honest men,” I said.

“*Bien.* Now you thing the *gouvernement* boun’ to ’ave some men w’at mos’ know the busi-ness, *n'est-ce pas?*”

“It ought to have them.”

Sorel wiped his brow again. “Now, w’ich you thing the mos’ honestes’ man, — Fidèle, or — Carron? W’ich you thing know the busi-ness bes’, — Fidèle, w’at been there, or Carron, w’at ain’ been there?”

“Fidèle, of course.”

“Then tell me, w’at for they bounce’ our Fidèle, and let Carron got ’is place?” and he burst into a harsh, resonant, contemptuous laugh. In a moment he resumed: “Now,” he said, “I only got one more thing to ax you,” and taking his felt hat in his hands, he held it on his knees, before him, and stooping a little forward,

eyed me closely: "You know w'at we talk sometimes, you an' me, 'bout our Frensh *république* — some *Orléanistes*, some *Légitimistes*, some *Bonapartistes*? You merember 'ow we talk, you and me?"

I nodded.

"We ain' got no *Orléanistes*, no *Bonapartistes*' *ici*, in this *gouvernement*, *n'est-ce pas?*"

I intimated that I had never met any.

"Now," he proceeded, with an increased bitterness in his tone and his hard smile, "I use' thing you one good frien' to me, *mais*, you been makin' fool of me all that time!"

"You don't think any such thing," I said.

"You know," he went on, "who bounce our *Fidèle*?"

"No."

Sorel received my reply with a low, incredulous laugh. Then he laid his hat down on the floor, drew his chair closer, held out his finger, and, with the air of one who shows another that he knows his secret he demanded: —

"*Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un 'Boss'?*"

I sat silent for a moment, looking at him, not knowing just what to say.

“*Mais*,” he went on, “all the *Américains*” (they were chiefly Irish) “roun’ my ‘ouse been tellin’ me, long time, ‘*Le Boss* goin’ bounce Fidèle.’ Me, I laugh w’en they say so. I say, ‘*Le Boss*? *C'est un créature d'imagination, pour nous effrayer*,’ you know, make us scar’t. ‘*C'est un loup-garou*,’ you know, — w’at make ‘fraid li’l chil’ren. That’s w’at I tell them. I thing then you would n’t been makin’ fool of me.”

“They don’t know what they are talking about,” I said. “How can they know why Fidèle is removed?”

“*Mais*, you jus’ wait; I goin’ tell you. I fin they do know. Fidèle take he sol’ier-papers, an’ he go see *le chef*” (here Sorel rose, and acted Fidèle). “Fidèle, ‘e show ‘is papers to *le chef*; ‘e say, ‘Now you boun’ tell me why *le bon gouvernement*, w’at’s been my frien’, bounce me now.’ ‘E say *le chef* boun’ to tell ‘im, — *il faut absolument!* ‘E say ‘e won’ go, way if *le chef* don’ tell ‘im; an’ you know, no man can’t scare our Fidèle!”

“Very well,” I said; “what did the collector, the *chef*, tell him? Fidèle is too lame, I suppose?”

“*Mais, non,*” with a suspicious smile. “*Le chef*, he mos’ cry,—yas, sar,—an’ ‘e say ‘e ain’ got no trouble ‘gainst Fidèle; *la république*, she ain’ got no trouble ‘gainst Fidèle. ‘E say ‘e di’n want Fidèle to go; *le gouvernement*, she di’n want ‘im to go. *Mais, ’e say*, ‘e can’t help hisself; *le gouvernement*, she can’t help herself. Yas, sar. Then Fidèle know w’at evarybody been tellin’ us was true,—‘e ‘Boss,’ ‘e make ‘im go!” And Sorel sat back in his chair.

“Now, I ax you one time more, he resumed: “*qu’est-ce que c’est qu’un ‘Boss’ ?*”

What could I say! How could I explain, off-hand, to this stranger, the big boss, the little boss, the State boss, the ward boss, the county boss, all burrowing underneath our theoretical government! How could I explain to him that Fidèle’s department in the custom-house had been allotted to a Congressman about to run for a second term, who needed it to control a few more ward-meetings,—needed, in the third ward caucus, those very French votes which Carron had been shrewd enough to steal away and organize! What could I say to Sorel

which he, innocent as he was, would not misconstrue as inconsistent with our past glorifications of our republic! What did I say! I do not know. I only remember that he interrupted me, harshly and abruptly, as he rose to go.

“You an’ me got great *pitié*, ain’ we,” he said, “for *notre France, la pauvre France*, ‘cause she got so many folks w’at tourbillonnent sous la surface,—*les Orléanistes les Bonapartistes*; don’ we say so? *Mais, il n’y en a pas, ici*,—you know, we ain’ got none here; don’ we say so? We ain’ got no *factionnaires* here! *Mais non!*” Then, lowering his voice to a hoarse whisper: “*Votre bonne république*,” he said, — “*c’est une république du théâtre!*”

He had hardly closed the door behind him, when he opened it again, and put in his head, and with his hard, mocking laugh, demanded, “*Qu’est-ce que c’est qu’un ‘Boss’?*” And as he walked down the hall, I could still hear his scornful laughter.

He never came to see me again. I sometimes heard of him through Carron, who had succeeded to Fidèle’s position and had elevated a consid-

erable part of his following: for several weeks they were employed at three dollars a day in the navy-yard, where, to their utter mystification, they moved, with a certain planetary regularity, ship-timber from the west to the east side of the yard, and then back from the east side to the west. You remember reading about this in the published accounts of our late congressional contest.

Though Sorel never visited me again, I occasionally saw him: once near the evening-school, when I went as a guest; once in the long market; once in the post-office; and once he touched me on the shoulder, as I was leaning over the street-railing, by the dock, looking down at a Swedish bark. Each time he had but one thing to say; and having said it, he would break into his harsh, ironical laugh, and pass along: —

“ *Qu'est-ce que c'est qu'un 'Boss' ?* ”

And Fidèle?

Still, if you will go to Madeira Place at sunset, you may see the cap and blouse come slowly in. Still the old sergeant sits at the head of the

table. But his ideal is gone; his idol has clay feet. No longer does he describe to new-comers from France the receipt of his pension. All the old fond pride in it is gone, and he takes the money now as dollars and cents.

In the conversation, however, around the table the great government at Washington is by no means forgotten. Sometimes Sorel tells his guests about the Boss.



THE NEW MINISTER'S GREAT OPPORTUNITY.

“THE minister's got a job,” said Mr. Snell.

Mr. Snell had been driven in by a shower from the painting of a barn, and was now sitting, with one bedaubed overall leg crossed over the other, in Mr. Hamblin's shop.

Half-a-dozen other men, who had likewise found in the rain a call to leisure, looked up at him inquiringly.

“How do you mean?” said Mr. Noyes, who sat beside him, girt with a nail-pocket. “‘The minister's got a job’? How do you mean?” And Mr. Noyes assumed a listener's air, and stroked his thin yellow beard.

Mr. Snell smiled, with half-shut, knowing eyes, but made no answer.

"How do you mean?" repeated Mr. Noyes; "'The minister's got a job'—of course he has—got a stiddy job. We knew that before."

"Very well," said Mr. Snell, with a placid face; "seeing's you know so much about it, enough said. Let it rest right there."

"But," said Mr. Noyes, nervously blowing his nose; "you lay down this proposition: 'The minister's got a job.' Now I ask, what is it?"

Mr. Snell uncrossed his legs, and stooped to pick up a last, which he proceeded to scan with a shrewd, critical eye.

"Narrer foot," he said to Mr. Hamblin.

"Private last — Dr. Hunter's," said Mr. Hamblin, laying down a boot upon which he was stitching an outer-sole, and rising to make a ponderous, elephantine excursion across the quaking shop to the earthen water-pitcher, from which he took a generous draught.

"Well, Brother Snell," said Mr. Noyes,— they were members together of a secret organization, of which Mr. Snell was P. G. W. T. F.,—"ain't you going to tell us? What—is this job? That is to say, what—er—is it?"

Brother Snell set his thumbs firmly in the

armholes of his waistcoat, surveyed the smoke-stained pictures pasted on the wall, looked keen, and softly whistled.

At last he condescended to explain.

“ Preaching Uncle Capen’s funeral sermon.”

There was a subdued general laugh. Even Mr. Hamblin’s leatheren apron shook.

Mr. Noyes, however, painfully looking down upon his beard to draw out a white hair, maintained his serious expression.

“ I don’t see much ‘ job ’ in that,” he said; “ a minister’s supposed to preach a hundred and four sermons in each and every year, and there’s plenty more where they come from. What’s one sermon more or less, when stock costs nothing? It’s like wheeling gravel from the pit.”

“ O. K.,” said Mr. Snell; “ if ‘t ain’t no trouble, then ‘t ain’t. But seeing’s you know, suppose you specify the materials for this particular discourse.”

Mr. Noyes looked a little disconcerted.

“ Well,” he said; “ of course, I can’t set here and compose a funereal discourse, off-hand, without no writing-desk; but there’s stock enough to make a sermon of, any time.”

"Oh, come," said Mr. Snell, "don't sneak out: particularize."

"Why," said Mr. Noyes, "you've only to open the leds of your Bible, and choose a text, and then: When did this happen? Why did this happen? To who did this happen? and so forth and so on; and there's your sermon. I've heard 'em so a hunderd times."

"All right," said Mr. Snell; "I don't doubt you know; but as for me, I for one never happened to hear of anything that Uncle Capen did but whitewash and saw wood. Now what sort of an autobiographical sermon could you make out of sawing wood?"

Whereat Leander Buffum proceeded, by that harsh, guttural noise well known to country boys, to imitate the sound of sawing through a log. His sally was warmly greeted.

"The minister might narrate," said Mr. Blood, "what Uncle Capen said to Issachar, when Issachar told him that he charged high for sawing wood. 'See here,' says Uncle Capen, 's'pos'n I do. My arms are shorter'n other folks's, and it takes me just so much longer to do it.'"

"Well," said Mr. Noyes, "I'm a fair man; always do exactly right is the rule I go by; and I will frankly admit, now and here, that if it's a biographical discourse they want, they'll have to cut corners."

"*Pre-cise-ly*," said Mr. Snell; "and that's just what they do want."

"Well, well," said Mr. Hamblin, laboriously rising and putting his spectacles into their silver case,—for it was supper-time,—"joking one side, if Uncle Capen never did set the pond afire, we'd all rather take his chances to-day, I guess, than those of some smarter men."

At which Mr. Snell turned red; for he was a very smart man and had just failed,—to everybody's surprise, since there was no reason in the world why he should fail,—and had created more merriment for the public than joy among his creditors, by paying a cent and a half on the dollar.

"Come in; sit down," said Dr. Hunter, as the young minister appeared at his office door; and he tipped back in his chair, and put his feet upon a table. "What's the news?"

"Doctor," said Mr. Holt, laughing, as he laid down his hat and took an arm-chair; "you told me to come to you for any information. Now I want materials for a sermon on old Mr. Capen."

The Doctor looked at him with a half-amused expression, and then sending out a curl of blue smoke, he watched it as it rose melting into the general air.

"You don't smoke, I believe?" he said to the minister.

Holt smiled and shook his head.

The Doctor put his cigar back into his mouth, clasped one knee in his hands, and fixed his eyes in meditation on a one-eared Hippocrates looking down with a dirty face from the top of a bookcase. Perhaps the Doctor was thinking of the two or three hundred complimentary visits he had been permitted to make upon Uncle Capen within ten years.

Presently a smile broke over his face.

"I must tell you, before I forget it," he said, "how Uncle Capen nursed one of my patients. Years and years ago, I had John Ellis, our postmaster now, down with a fever. One night

Uncle Capen watched—you know he was spry and active till he was ninety. Every hour he was to give Ellis a little ice-water; and when the first time came, he took a table-spoonful — there was only a dim light in the room — and poured the ice-water down Ellis's neck. Well, Ellis jumped, as much as so sick a man could, and then lifted his finger to his lips: 'Here 's my mouth,' said he. 'Why, why,' said Uncle Capen, 'is that your mouth? I took that for a wrinkle in your forehead.' "

The minister laughed.

"I have heard a score of such stories to-day," he said; "there seem to be enough of them; but I can't find anything adapted to a sermon, and yet they seem to expect a detailed biography."

"Ah, that's just the trouble," said the Doctor. "But let us go into the house; my wife remembers everything that ever happens, and she can post you up on Uncle Capen, if anybody can."

So they crossed the door-yard into the house.

Mrs. Hunter was sewing; a neighbor, come to tea, was crocheting wristers for her grandson.

They were both talking at once as the Doctor opened the sitting-room door.

"Since neither of you appears to be listening," he said, as they started up, "I shall not apologize for interrupting. Mr. Holt is collecting facts about Uncle Capen for his funeral sermon, and I thought that my good wife could help him out, if anybody could. So I will leave him."

And the Doctor, nodding, went into the hall for his coat and driving-gloves, and, going out, disappeared about the corner of the house.

"You will really oblige me very much, Mrs. Hunter," said the minister, "— or Mrs. French, — if you can give me any particulars about old Mr. Capen's life. His family seem to be rather sensitive, and they depend on a long, old-fashioned funeral sermon; and here I am utterly bare of facts."

"Why, yes," said Mrs. Hunter; "of course, now — "

"Why, yes; everybody knows all about him," said Mrs. French.

And then they laid their work down and relapsed into meditation.

"Oh!" said Mrs. Hunter, in a moment. "No, though—"

"Why, you know," said Mrs. French,—"no—I guess, on the whole—"

"You remember," said the Doctor's wife to Mrs. French, with a faint smile, "the time he papered my east chamber—don't you—how he made the pattern come?"

And then they both laughed gently for a moment.

"Well, I have always known him," said Mrs. French. "But really, being asked so suddenly, it seems to drive everything out of my head."

"Yes," said Mrs. Hunter, "and it's odd that I can't think of exactly the thing, just at this minute; but if I do, I will run over to the parsonage this evening."

"Yes, so will I," said Mrs. French; "I know that I shall think of oceans of things just as soon as you are gone."

"Won't you stay to tea?" said Mrs. Hunter, as Holt rose to go. "The Doctor has gone; but we never count on him."

"No, I thank you," said Mr. Holt. "If I am to invent a biography, I may as well be at it."

Mrs. Hunter went with him to the door.

"I must just tell you," she said, "one of Uncle Capen's sayings. It was long ago, at the time I was married and first came here. I had a young men's Bible-class in Sunday-school, and Uncle Capen came into it. He always wore a cap, and sat at meetings with the boys. So, one Sunday, we had in the lesson that verse, — you know, — that if all these things should be written, even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written; and there Uncle Capen stopped me, and said he, 'I suppose that means the world as known to the ancients?'"

Holt put on his hat, and with a smile turned and went on his way toward the parsonage; but he remembered that he had promised to call at what the local paper termed "the late residence of the deceased," where, on the one hundredth birthday of the centenarian, according to the poet's corner, —

"Friends, neighbors, and visitors he did receive
From early in the morning till dewy eve."

So he turned his steps in that direction.

He opened the clicking latch of the gate and rattled the knocker on the front door of the lit-

tle cottage; and a tall, motherly woman of the neighborhood appeared and ushered him in.

Uncle Capen's unmarried daughter, a woman of sixty, her two brothers and their wives, and half-a-dozen neighbors were sitting in the tidy kitchen, where a crackling wood-fire in the stove was suggesting a hospitable cup of tea.

The minister's appearance, breaking the formal gloom, was welcomed.

"Well," said Miss Maria, "I suppose the sermon is all writ by this time. I think likely you've come down to read it to us."

"No," said Holt, "I have left the actual writing of it till I get all my facts. I thought perhaps you might have thought of something else."

"No; I told you everything there was about father yesterday," she said. "I'm sure you can't lack of things to put in; why, father lived a hundred years—and longer, too, for he was a hundred years and six days, you remember."

"You know," said Holt, "there are a great many things that are very interesting to a man's immediate friends that don't interest the public." And he looked to Mr. Small for confirmation.

"Yes, that's so," said Mr. Small, nodding wisely.

"But, you see, father was a centenarian," said Maria, "and so that makes everything about him interesting. It's a lesson to the young, you know."

"Oh, yes, that's so," said Mr. Small, "if a man lives to be a centurion."

"Well, you all knew our good friend," said Mr. Holt. "If any of you will suggest anything, I shall be very glad to put it in."

Nobody spoke for a moment.

"There's one interesting thing," said one of the sons, a little old man much like his father; "that is, that none of his children have ever gone meandering off; we've all remained"—he might almost have said remained seated—"all our lives, right about him."

"I will allude to that," said Mr. Holt. "I hope you have something else, for I am afraid of running short of material: you see I am a stranger here."

"Why, I hope there won't be any trouble about it," said Maria, in sudden consternation. "I was a little afraid to give it out to so young

a man as you, and I thought some of giving the preference to Father Cobb, but I did n't quite like to have it go out of the village, nor to deprive you of the opportunity; and they all assured me that you was smart. But if you're feeling nervous, perhaps we 'd better have him still; he 's always ready."

"Just as you like," said Holt, modestly; "if he would be willing to preach the sermon, we might leave it that way, and I will add a few remarks."

But Maria's zeal for Father Cobb was a flash in the pan. He was a sickly farmer, a licensed preacher, who, when he was called upon occasionally to meet a sudden exigency, usually preached on the beheading of John the Baptist.

"I guess you 've got things enough to write," said Maria, consolingly; "you know how awfully a thing doos drag out when you come to write it down on paper. Remember to tell how we 've all stayed right here."

When Holt went out, he saw Mr. Small beckoning him to come to where his green wagon stood under a tree.

"I must tell you," he said, with an awkwardly

repressed smile, "about a trade of Uncle Capen's. He had a little lot up our way that they wanted for a schoolhouse, and he agreed to sell it for what it cost him, and the selectmen, knowing what it cost him,— fifty dollars,— agreed with him that way. But come to sign the deed, he called for a hundred dollars." "How's that," says they; "you bought it of Captain Sam Bowen for fifty dollars." "Yes, but see here," says Uncle Capen, "it's cost me on an average five dollars a year, for the ten year I've had it, for manure and ploughing and seed, and that's fifty dollars more." "But you've sold the garden stuff off it, and had the money," says they. "Yes," says Uncle Capen, "but that money's spent and eat up long ago!'"

The minister smiled, shook hands with Mr. Small, and went home.

The church was crowded. Horses filled the sheds, horses were tied to the fences all up and down the street. Funerals are always popular in the country, and this one had a double element of attractiveness. The whole population of the town, having watched with a lively interest,

for years back, Uncle Capen's progress to his hundredth birthday, expected now some electrical effect, analogous to an apotheosis.

In the front pews were the chief mourners, filled with the sweet intoxication of pre-eminence.

The opening exercises were finished, a hymn was sung,—

“Life is a span,”

and Father Cobb arose to make his introductory remarks.

He began with some reminiscences of the first time he saw Uncle Capen, some thirty years before, and spoke of having viewed him even then as an aged man, and of having remarked to him that he was walking down the valley of life with one foot in the grave. He called attention to Uncle Capen's virtues, and pointed out their connection with his longevity. He had not smoked for some forty years; therefore, if the youth who were present desired to attain his age, let them not smoke. He had been a total abstainer, moreover, from his seventieth year; let them, if they would rival his longevity, follow his example. The good man closed with a feel-

ing allusion to the relatives, in the front pew, mourning like the disciples of John the Baptist after his "beheadment." Another hymn was sung, —

"A vapor brief and swiftly gone."

Then there was deep silence as the minister rose and gave out his text: "*I have been young, and now I am old.*"

"At the time of the grand review in Washington," he said, "that mighty pageant that fittingly closed the drama of the war, I was a spectator, crippled then by a gun-shot wound, and unable to march. From an upper window I saw that host file by, about to record its greatest triumph by melting quietly into the general citizenship, — a mighty, resistless army about to fade and leave no trace, except here and there a one-armed man, or a blue flannel jacket behind a plough. Often now, when I close my eyes, that picture rises: that gallant host, those tattered flags; and I hear the shouts that rose when my brigade, with their flaming scarfs, went trooping by. Little as I may have done, as a humble member of that army, no earthly treasure could buy from me the thought

of my fellowship with it, or even the memory of that great review.

“ But that display was mere tinsel show compared with the great pageant that has moved before those few men who have lived through the whole length of the past hundred years.

“ Before me lies the form of a man who, though he has passed his days with no distinction but that of an honest man, has lived through some of the most remarkable events of all the ages. For a hundred years a mighty pageant has been passing before him. I would rather have lived that hundred years than any other. I am deeply touched to reflect that he who lately inhabited this cold tenement of clay connects our generation with that of Washington. And it is impossible to speak of one whose great age draws together this assembly, without recalling events through which he lived.

“ Our friend was born in this village. This town then included the adjoining towns to the north and south. The region was then more sparsely settled, although many houses standing then have disappeared. While he was sleeping peacefully in the cradle, while he

was opening on the world childhood's wide, wondering eyes, those great men whose names are our perpetual benediction were planning for freedom from a foreign yoke. While he was passing through the happy years of early childhood, the fierce clash of arms resounded through the little strip of territory which then made up the United States. I can hardly realize that, as a child, he heard as a fresh, new, real story, of the deeds of Lexington, from the lips of men then young who had been in the fight, or listened as one of an eager group gathered about the fireside, or in the old, now deserted tavern on the turnpike, to the story of Bunker Hill.

“And when, the yoke of tyranny thrown off, in our country and in France, Lafayette, the mere mention of whose name brings tears to the eyes of every true American, came to see the America that he loved and that loved him, he on whose cold, rigid face I now look down, joined in one of those enthusiastic throngs that made the visit like a Roman Triumph.

“But turn to the world of Nature, and think

of the panoramic scenes that have passed before those now impassive eyes. In our friend's boyhood there was no practical mode of swift communication of news. In great emergencies, to be sure, some patriot hand might flash the beacon-light from a lofty tower; but news crept slowly over our hand-breath nation, and it was months after a presidential election before the result was generally known. He lived to see the telegraph flashing swiftly about the globe, annihilating time and space and bringing the scattered nations into greater unity.

“And think, my hearers, for one moment, of the wonders of electricity. Here is a power which we name but do not know; which flashes through the sky, shatters great trees, burns buildings, strikes men dead in the fields; and we have learned to lead it, all unseen, from our house-tops to the earth; we tame this mighty, secret, unknown power into serving us as a daily messenger; and no man sets the limits now to the servitude that we shall yet bind it down to.

“Again, my hearers, when our friend was well advanced in life, there was still no better

mode of travel between distant points than the slow, rumbling stage-coach ; many who are here remember well its delays and discomforts. He saw the first tentative efforts of that mighty factor steam to transport more swiftly. He saw the first railroad built in the country ; he lived to see the land covered with the iron net-work.

“And what a transition is this ! Pause for a moment to consider it. How much does this imply. With the late improvements in agricultural machinery, with the cheapening of steel rails, the boundless prairie farms of the West are now brought into competition with the fields of Great Britain in supplying the Englishman’s table, and seem not unlikely, within this generation, to break down the aristocratic holding of land, and so perhaps to undermine aristocracy itself.”

So the preacher continued, speaking of different improvements, and lastly of the invention of daguerreotypes and photographs. He called the attention of his hearers to this almost miraculous art of indelibly fixing the expression of a countenance, and drew a lesson as to the

permanent effect of our daily looks and expression on those among whom we live. He considered at length the vast amount of happiness which had been caused by bringing pictures of loved ones within the reach of all; the increase of family affection and general good feeling which must have resulted from the invention; he suggested a possible change in the civilization of the older nations through the constant sending home, by prosperous adopted citizens, of photographs of themselves and of their homes, and alluded to the effect which this must have had upon immigration.

Finally he adverted to the fact that the sons of the deceased, who sat before him, had not yielded to the restless spirit of adventure, but had found "no place like home."

"But I fear," he said at last, "that the interest of my subject has made me transgress upon your patience; and with a word or two more I will close.

"When we remember what hard, trying things often arise within a single day, let us rightly estimate the patient well-doing of a man who has lived a blameless life for a hundred

years. When we remember what harm, what sin, can be crowded into a single moment, let us rightly estimate the principle that kept him so close to the Golden Rule, not for a day, not for a decade or a generation, but for a hundred years.

“And now, as we are about to lay his deserted body in the earth, let not our perceptions be dulled by the constant repetition in this world of death and burial. At this hour our friend is no longer aged; wrinkles and furrows, trembling limbs and snowy locks he has left behind him, and he knows, we believe, to-day, more than the wisest philosopher on earth. We may study and argue, all our lives, to discover the nature of life, or the form it takes beyond the grave; but in one moment of swift transition the righteous man may learn it all. We differ widely one from another, here, in mental power. A slight hardening of some tissue of the brain might have left a Shakspeare an attorney's clerk. But, in the brighter world, no such impediments prevent, I believe, clear vision and clear expression; and differences of mind that seem world-wide here, may vanish there. When the

spirit breaks its earthly prison and flies away, who can tell how bright and free the humblest of us may come to be! There may be a more varied truth than we commonly think, in the words,—‘The last shall be first.’

“Let this day be remembered. Let us think of the vast display of Nature’s forces which was made within the long period of our old neighbor’s life; but let us also reflect upon the bright pageant that is now unrolling itself before him in a better world.”

That evening Miss Maria and her brothers, sitting in state in the little old house, received many a caller; and the conversation was chiefly upon one theme,—not the funeral sermon, although that was commended as a frank and simple biographical discourse, but the great events which had accompanied Uncle Capen’s progress through this world, almost like those which Horace records in his Ode to Augustus.

“That’s trew, every word,” said Apollos Carver; “when Uncle Capen was a boy there was n’t not one railroad in the hull breadth of the United States, and just think: why now you

can go in a Pullerman car clear'n acrost to San Francisco. My daughter lives in Oakland, just acrost a ferry from there."

"Well, then, there's photographing," said Captain Abel. "It doos seem amazing, as the minister said: you set down, and square yourself, and slick your hair, and stare stiddy into a funnel, and a man ducks his head under a covering, and pop! there you be, as natural as life,—if not more so. And when Uncle Capen was a young man, there was n't nothing but portraits and minnytires, and these black-paper-and-scissors portraits,—what do they call 'em? Yes, sir, all that come in under his observation."

"Yes," said one of the sons, "'t is wonderful; my wife and me was took setting on a settee in the Garding of Eden,—lions and tigers and other scriptural objects in the background."

"And don't forget the telegraphht," said Maria; "don't forget that."

"Trew," said Apollos, "that's another thing. I hed a message come once-t from my son that lives to Taunton. We was all so sca't and faint when we see it, that we did n't none of us dast

to open it, and finally the feller that druv over with it hed to open it fur us."

"What was there in it?" said Mr. Small; "sickness? — death?"

"No, he wanted his thick coat expressed up. But my wife didn't get over the shock for some time. Wonderful thing, that telegraph — here's a man standing a hundred miles off, like enough, and harpooning an idea chock right into your mind."

"Then that was a beautiful truth," said Maria: "that father and Shakspeare would like enough be changed right round, in Heaven; I always said father was n't appreciated here."

"Well," said Apollos, "'tis always so; we don't begin to realize the value of a thing tell we lose it. Now that we sort o' stand and gaze at Uncle Capen at a fair distance, as it were, he looms. Ef he only hed n't kep' so quiet, always, about them 'ere wonders. A man really ought, in justice to himself, to blow his own horn — jest a little. But that was a grand discourse, wa' n't it, now?"

"Oh, yes," said Maria, "though I did feel nervous for the young man. Still, when you

come to think what materials he had to make a sermon out of,—why, how could he help it! And yet, I doubt not he takes all the credit to himself."

"I should really have liked to have heard Father Cobb treat the subject," said Mrs. Small, rising to go, and nodding to her husband. "'Twas a grand theme. But 'twas a real chance for the new minister. Such an opportunity doesn't happen not once in a lifetime."

The next morning, after breakfast, on his way home from the post-office, the minister stopped in at Dr. Hunter's office. The Doctor was reading a newspaper.

Mr. Holt took a chair in silence.

The Doctor laid down the paper and eyed him quizzically, and then slowly shook his head.

"I don't know about you ministers," he said. "I attended the funeral; I heard the biographical discourse; I understand it gave great satisfaction; I have reflected on it over night; and now, what I want to know is,

what on earth there was in it about Uncle Capen."

The minister smiled.

"I think," he replied, "that all that I said about Uncle Capen was strictly true."





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